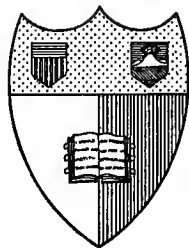


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OF
THE PRESENT-DAY

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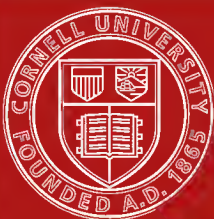
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AMERICAN AUTHORSHIP
OF
THE PRESENT-DAY
(SINCE 1890)

AMERICAN AUTHORSHIP
OF
THE PRESENT-DAY
(SINCE 1890)

BY
T. E. RANKIN
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

ANN ARBOR
GEORGE WAHR
1918

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THE ANN ARBOR PRESS
ANN ARBOR

PREFACE

Not all of us can agree with Brunetière that in art and literature the beginning of wisdom is to distrust what we like. But there is no division of opinion about the kind of books to which the majority of readers to-day devote themselves, — it is only the kind that they “like.” I do not believe that we ought to deny to ourselves what gives us pleasure just because it gives us pleasure; but it is the aim of this little book to be an aid to better reading than that which gives mental excitement alone. “Our heritage as Americans is independence, originality, self-reliance, and sympathetic energy animated by a strong ethical instinct, and these are the forces which can produce a higher and broader civilization than the world has yet seen if we choose to have it so.” We shall not be choosing to have it so, if in feeding the mind, as the mass of people do by reading chiefly, we overlook the books which touch moral truth and human passion with largeness, sanity, and attractiveness of form. The following pages attempt to indicate only those books which, amid the deluge of publication during the last quarter of a century in the United States and Canada, are most worth while finding and keeping for companionship.

I wish to acknowledge indebtedness to the eager spirit in search of "good reading" which is constantly displayed by my students; and to Professor R. W. Cowden for patient and valuable aid in reading the proofs for this volume.

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. I
PROSE

I

PROSE

The Profession of Letters. — Joseph Story, Associate Justice of the Supreme Court, wrote, in 1819, "So great is the call for talents of all sorts in the active use of professional and other business in America, that few of our ablest men have leisure to devote exclusively to literature or the fine arts, or to composition on abstract science. This obvious reason will explain why we have few professional authors and those not among our ablest men." Precisely, such is the situation now one hundred years after the eminent jurist courteously explained the state of letters in his day. The call for talent in the varied activities of a public character never was greater in the world's history, and the ability and energy now devoted to affairs of state and of business are of the highest order. And yet many able men and women are giving themselves almost exclusively to thoughtful and artistic authorship; furthermore, many whose vocation is the law, or medicine, or banking, or teaching, or editing, are also employing a portion of their talents in adding to the beauty, uplift, refreshment, and inspiration which it is the function of literature to bring to men. We need many more whose brains can beat into rhythm what we, "busy" people, can feel only, who can express what we, too, hold, that things beautiful are best.

One
hundred
years ago

And to-day

The Future

Form The majority of those who are making the literature of America to-day are engaged in writing prose fiction or drama or poetry. Yet there are numerous scholarly and influential historians, philosophers, and essayists whose work is contributing to the advancement of thought and life, though, with but few exceptions, their productions lack the antiseptic of style. But all are writing because they must, — they are actuated by the drive of impulse from within, — and because there is an eager demand for what they can supply.

Style If there has been any change in methods of composition and in details of style since fifty years ago, it has been in the direction of simplicity, terseness, and elimination of ornament. However, the extreme brevity of sentence which is the vogue with the younger generation often gives the impression of thinness of thought, and rather wastes than conserves the attention by the over-emphasis which results from the explosive character of the short, sharp phrase.

I

GENERAL LITERATURE

Historians. — Within the past thirty years many historians have flourished, the work of whom will always be indispensable to the student of history. Among them have been John Fiske, Henry Adams, James Ford Rhodes, James Schouler, Edward Channing, John Bach McMaster, Alfred Thayer Mahan, Albert Bushnell Hart, and Woodrow Wilson, but of these perhaps only John Fiske and Woodrow Wilson will be considered by future historians of literature. A multitude

John Fiske was born at Middletown, Connecticut, in 1842. From his earliest youth he was distinguished as an eager reader and a serious thinker both in history and in science. He soon began to display wide scholarship and diversified mental interests. One of his earlier books manifested also a gift for story-telling and for the play of fancy. This book was entitled *Myths and Myth-Makers*. It traced to their sources many popular superstitions and legends based upon both fancy and fact. His *Outlines of Cosmic Philosophy* is an interpretation of the discoveries of Charles Darwin and a development of the thought of Herbert Spencer. *The Destiny of Man* and *The Idea of God* were also among Fiske's contributions to philosophic thought. His *Excursions of an Evolutionist* interestingly and convincingly presented his experience and thinking in the field which the title indicates. Then the *American Political Ideas* is among the best of books setting forth the fundamental things in American political life. Fiske

General works

His
histories

Fiske's best work of all was done in the field of history proper, particularly in *The Discovery of America*, *The Beginnings of New England*, and *The Critical Period of American History*. Of these three books *The Discovery of America* is the ablest. It is not only an account of the voyages of Columbus and of his predecessors and those who soon followed him, but is also a summary of the old world stories of a fabled western world and a masterful and attractive description of the background of European civilization at the time of the discovery of this continent. In addition to the popularity accruing from these and other volumes, the work of Fiske as a university lecturer brought to him great renown. He died July 4, 1901, a loss to popular philosophy and science and history and to literature.

Wilson

Woodrow Wilson, professor in and then president of Princeton University, Governor of New Jersey, and President of the United States for two terms, beginning in 1912, first attracted attention by his political and semi-literary writings while he was teaching in Georgia. He has written one important book, *The State*, upon the theory of government, and others of less importance upon the same subject. The most valuable of his works consist of a small volume entitled *Division and Reunion*, which treats of the period of the Civil War and Reconstruction, and a series of five volumes containing in interesting narrative form, and with thoughtful comment, the history of the United States and of the American continent before the formation of the union. The addresses and state papers written during the great World War are almost ideal for their clearness, directness, and energy. An early

volume entitled *Mere Literature and Other Essays* had already given artistic promise which these state papers have amply fulfilled.

Essayists in Journalism, Philosophy, and General Culture. — Of general essayists to-day, the number is almost beyond reckoning, but the talents of most of them have found employment in writing chiefly for the periodical press. The greater part of the content of the periodicals is doomed to brief life and fame, but is certain of a large immediate circulation. Journalism in America, including daily, weekly, monthly, and other serial publications, at the beginning of the twentieth century had attained the phenomenal quantity of eight billions of copies of periodicals for twelve months, with a market value of two hundred and twenty-five millions of dollars. The subsequent eighteen years have seen a progress in volume whose rapidity has been almost beyond belief. It has been estimated that two hundred and fifty millions of dollars are now spent annually in the United States for newspapers only, and that these newspapers represent a cost of two hundred and thirty-seven millions more than all the text-books in all the public schools. Newspapers pour from the press in unending succession and in editions that are enormous. New York city, as might be expected from its size, location, and great wealth, has drawn to it the most ambitious publishers and editors. *The Evening Post*, *The Tribune*, *The Sun*, *The Times*, and *The World*, are unsurpassed for enterprise and influence. Opinions vary as to their relative merits, but *The Times* gives more attention to literature than does any one of the others, and at present contains the

Journalism

The
Newspaper

best written editorials. *The Boston Transcript*, *The Springfield Republican*, and *The Chicago Tribune* are now generally considered the ablest of the newspapers published outside the metropolis.

Magazines

The eighteenth century saw the rise and decay of a score of good monthly magazines in this country, from the early ventures of Franklin to the attempts of Charles Brockden Brown. During the first half of the nineteenth century nearly all the foremost thinkers and authors were associated with magazines, either as editors or as contributors. Among the editors were Washington Irving, Richard Henry Dana, Sr., George P. Morris, Samuel Woodworth, Nathaniel P. Willis, William Cullen Bryant, Charles Fenno Hoffman, Edgar Allan Poe, George R. Graham, George Ripley, Margaret Fuller, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Park Benjamin, and Mrs. Caroline M. Kirkland. The contributors included practically all the names that find mention in American history from 1800 to 1850. But only one or two of the magazines of that half-century have survived, the most important being the *North American Review*, which was founded in 1815, and is now the oldest of all periodicals.

In 1850 *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* was established, and was quickly followed by the founding of *Putnam's Monthly Magazine* and *The Atlantic Monthly*. Between 1868 and 1895 the following popular monthlies were established: *Lippincott's Magazine*, *The Overland Monthly*, *The Century Magazine*, *Scribner's Magazine*, *The Forum*, *The Cosmopolitan*, *The Arena*, *Munsey's Magazine*, *McClure's Magazine*, and *The Bookman*. The finest contributions have been

made to *The Atlantic*, *Harper's*, *The Century*, and *Scribner's*. *The Nation*, a weekly, *The Dial*, a monthly, and *The Sewanee Review*, a quarterly, are among the ablest of the publications devoted to reviews and literary criticism. A recently founded review, *The New Republic*, came at once into favor, especially among those who were wearied of the cock-sureness and air of intellectual superiority which have so long characterized *The Nation*. But the newer magazine appears to be finding it difficult to avoid the beaten path.

Critical
publications

It is amid this variety and this immensity in number of publications that the essayist has almost lost himself; for, in writing for the daily newspaper he speaks chiefly for the moment and to the passing crowd, and in writing for the magazines he is not often doing more than trying himself out. But if his magazine contributions prove to be successful, they are likely at a later time to be found in book form. Newspaper articles published as books have usually found but brief popularity.

Among the many essayists of this day, a few have stood forth prominently, — William Dean Howells, F. Marion Crawford, Frank Norris, Samuel McChord Crothers, Agnes Repplier, Paul Elmer More, and Lafcadio Hearn being those who seemingly are sure of readers fifty years hence. We can hardly fail to include John Burroughs among the essayists of our day, though his greater works were all published before 1890. His books since that date include fourteen titles, and one of them is a volume of poems. Mr. Howells also belongs to a generation older than the

The
Essayists

Howells

present, but his *Criticism and Fiction* was published as late as 1895. F. Marion Crawford's little book called
Crawford *The Novel — What It Is* will certainly be a classic in the field of inquiry concerning the art of the novel.
Norris Frank Norris's *The Responsibilities of a Novelist* will not fail to stimulate every reader who is awake to what is important and original in criticism.

Samuel McChord Crothers has published several
Crothers books whose material has been collected from various magazines. *The Gentler Reader* surpasses all the rest, and has made an epoch in many a young student's reading life. The work of Mr. Crothers has an unbroken charm, humor, and uplifting power.

Agnes Repplier, born of French parentage in Philadelphia, exhibits much of the strongly individual temperament which makes the writer of power. She is interesting for the note of protest which runs through all her work, a dissent from widely accepted modern views of things. Yet she is keenly alive to all that is occurring in the world of to-day, and not hostile to its life so much as critical of its easy-going opinions. Her essays may be found in almost every first-class magazine, where they are eagerly sought for by the cultivated reader. From *Books and Men* published in 1888 to *The Cat*, 1912, there is a baker's dozen of books, all of them pleasant, witty, and thoughtful.

A more scientific, more widely informed, and more philosophic critic than Miss Repplier is Paul Elmer More, formerly a teacher and now on the editorial staff
More of *The Nation*. Mr. More has appealed to the reader who is not merely cultivated but cultivated within a

special field, that of criticism which is based upon interpretative philosophic insight rather than upon personal impressions. His *Shelburne Essays*, in several volumes, represent the best that is known and thought to-day in the way of a steadfast spiritual interpretation of what men of letters have been doing in the world. He is greatly interested in artistic form, and in all elements of natural beauty to be found in books; but he is interested even more in the fundamental brain-work which is inspired by and guided by ethical and religious mood.

Lafcadio Hearn must be accorded, even in so brief a book as this, much more extended treatment, for his creative imagination sets him as an artist far above most of his contemporaries. His origin was not American. He was born in 1850 upon one of the Greek islands. His father was an Englishman and his mother a Greek. He was educated in England, but removed to America and became a journalist at Cincinnati and then at New Orleans, and later a teacher, and finally an extensive traveller. The last years of Hearn were spent in Japan. He is best known as a writer upon topics connected with that country, where he became a Japanese citizen, married a Japanese woman, and upon his death in 1904 was buried with full Buddhist rites, the first foreigner, if a citizen of a country can be called a foreigner there, to be so distinguished in the island empire.

Lafcadio
Hearn

Several of Hearn's books were published before our period, among them *Stray Leaves from Strange Literatures*, *Some Chinese Ghosts*, and *Chita*. The first two show their author's faculty for assimilation of

Early work

foreign ideas and for stamping them with his own imagery and thought. *Stray Leaves* reveals his early interest in things Egyptian, Indian, Finnish, and Hebrew. *Some Chinese Ghosts* re-tells the content of certain bits of Chinese literature. Comprehension of and sympathy with the elusive mystery of the Orient is here both strong and delicate; the work is original, too, as gems cut and re-set are counted original with the lapidary. *Chita: A Memory of Last Island*, is a story of the sea and of the hurricane which destroyed a Caribbean Sea island resort of wealthy citizens of New Orleans, a story of human love and misery, a tragic story of how

Nature whistled with all her winds,
Did as she pleased, and went her way.

In descriptive power no other book by its author exceeds *Chita*. But others are more thoughtful, as they were more mature.

Later and
greater
work

Just before his death, Lafcadio Hearn read the printer's proofs of the most thoughtful of his books, *Japan, an Interpretation*. Three others, however, are more often read, — *Kotto*, *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan*, and *Kokoro*. The word "Kokoro," as the sub-title "*Hints and Echoes of Japanese Inner Life*" indicates, means something equivalent to "heart," as when we speak of "the heart of things." This book contains several brief essays, each complete in itself, and is replete with ideas that are somewhat unusual to the western mind. Some of the essays are extraordinary both for thought and for artistic grace and power, among them "By Force of Karma," "The Idea of Preëxistence," and "The Genius of Japanese Civilization." The last is

the most interesting to one who is an observer of the recent entrance of Japan into a sphere of world-activity. In 1917 was brought out an edition of Hearn's lectures delivered at a Japanese University, and entitled *Life and Literature*. This book is an excellent one with which to initiate oneself into the thought and work of Hearn. The student of literature is interested to find style defined here as character, and literature, in so far as it is a fine art, as the best expression of the most intimate experience.

Hearn was an unusual artist in words. Restrained in representing his thought, suggesting rather than setting it out in systematic detail, strangely subtle in the bearing of his suggestions, graceful and deft in descriptive touch, he is sure of bringing back again and again to his books any intelligent reader who once dips within them. The thought of Hearn reverberates in one's mind, after he has read him, as the music of a bell-like instrument, and moves one with the meanings with which it is fraught. It is disturbing, too, to some traditional ideas of the occidental mind concerning things we have deemed of importance. His most imposing thinking has been exerted upon the effort to fuse the spirit of western evolutionary science with the Indian Buddhism which had already fused itself with, or grafted itself upon, the artistic sense of Japan. A strange compound he makes, but a most modern one. The beauty of his language is partly due to its strangely new meaning, and to the fact that it is characterized, as the Japanese language is, by an aversion to saying all and leaving nothing to the reader's imagination. Mingled with the savor and flavor of

His language
and thought

Hearn's western experience, all this is intensely modern, — even ahead of its time. He will be more eagerly claimed by us as time advances.

Philosophy

American philosophy has tended in our day to expend its interest upon practical psychology and educational problems rather than upon the problems of the origin and nature and destiny of the universe, or what is called metaphysics. The average man ignores the claim of philosophy to be the science of the sciences, and desires to know what the philosopher can do to help him get on in the world. The philosopher of to-day seems to desire to meet the demand as much as he can, though is not entirely neglectful of the old searchings after the truth about first and ultimate things. Hence the prevailing character of the labors of John Dewey, William James, Borden Parker Bowne, and Josiah Royce.

Dewey

John Dewey stands among the foremost of the "intellectuals" of the present day in America. His studies in educational theory and in social conditions have led to a number of thoughtful volumes, all lacking, however, in warmth and fervor and therefore having little appeal to the average reader. Professor Bowne's

Bowne

Principles of Ethics falls within the present period, having been published in 1892, and, as are his earlier works upon psychological theory, upon the philosophy of Herbert Spencer, upon theism, and upon metaphysics, is worthy of careful perusal by the student of the

Josiah Royce

thought of the United States. Professor Royce, a Californian, who gave his attention largely to popularizing the thought of Hegel, was a much more free and fresh and vigorous author than either Dewey or

Bowne, even though he wrote of the more theoretical aspects of man's thought upon the world and man rather than upon the practical procedure of man's life. *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, *The Conception of God*, *Studies of Good and Evil*, *The Conception of Immortality*, and *The World and the Individual*, all published between 1892 and 1901, are notable books of a notable thinker.

But it is William James who has held the advantage over his fellow philosophers because of the clearness and simplicity and audacity of his style. He has at times written of philosophical problems in almost the language of "the man in the street." Perhaps he has occasionally thinned his thought down by doing so, but his influence in both America and Europe appears as yet to have been all the more effective for this freshness and even carelessness of style. Between 1890 and 1907 William James wrote *Principles of Psychology*, in two volumes, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*, *Human Immortality*, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, and *Pragmatism*, and many other books and articles. It has recently been asserted that Prussianism and Pragmatism are in the long run convertible terms, and, while this judgment is too harsh, it is true that great numbers of people have too readily surrendered, without thought, to James's way of thinking, — (to the belief that the value of a thing depends wholly upon its working efficiency.) Yet the books of William James are very modern, and they are eminently readable. It still remains to bring philosophy more closely down to earth than he has brought it.

William
James

American Universities have many able and original thinkers and expounders of philosophy among their professors. Whether they will take a place in the history of our literature does not yet appear. Perhaps the work of George Santayana should not be passed entirely by, especially his volumes upon *The Sense of Beauty* and *Reason in Art*; but he belongs with greater right to literature through his disclosing the "soul's invincible surmise" in his sonnet sequence. These sonnets are somewhat subdued in emotion, but are very nearly perfect in their technique, and are filled with thought, now elusive and again straightforwardly simple and appealing. After all, philosophy and poetry are not unallied.

A Literary
Naturalist

Amid the multitude of authors who have attempted description and interpretation of the life of nature upon our west coast, John Muir is supreme. His *The Mountains of California* is a book bright with the beauty of the spirit of its author as well as with the grandeur and charm of its subject.

II

WRITERS OF FICTION

The Short-Story. — The story-tellers in the prose of our own time may be grouped as Short-story Writers, Writers of Novelettes, and Novelists. If at first thought the classification of the novelette apart from the other two types of prose fiction seems not justified, perhaps it may not seem entirely so when its discussion has been presented.

The leading short-story writers since 1890 have been Henry Cuyler Bunner, Henry van Dyke, Hamlin Garland, Gertrude Atherton, Margaret Deland, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Alice Brown, William Sydney Porter (O. Henry), James Oppenheim, Thomas Nelson Page, and James Lane Allen. Shall we include others? At what name should we then draw the line? These, at least, are names of writers about whose standing there can no longer be much controversy; but if we were to place with them Myra Kelly, Katherine Fullerton Gerould, Bruno Lessing, Joseph Lincoln, Lloyd Osbourne, or even Jack London, there would be a definite demand from almost every reader that this, or that, or another be added to the list of names of the enchanters. Each of those we have named as fairly certain of lasting fame has been imitated, but each remains unequalled in his special field. And yet no one of these has risen to equality with their predecessors who dominated the short-story field a generation ago, Bret Harte, Henry James, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, and George Washington Cable.

Writers of
Short-Stories

Bunner

H. C. Bunner was for years editor of *Puck*, and his short-stories are, most of them, humorous in conception and in development of detail. He had the power of perfectly focusing the interest upon one situation, — which is the truly distinctive art of the modern short-story. It is doubtful whether any writer of short-stories ever has handled striking endings in a more masterly fashion than did Bunner, unless it was the French writer Maupassant. And Bunner knew how few details were necessary to secure sufficient fixing of attention upon the point of his story. His stories are as American as any ever written. Possibly the best of them are *A Sisterly Scheme* and *Our Aromatic Uncle*.

van Dyke

Henry van Dyke has been a clergyman, a Princeton professor, and a diplomat in the foreign service of the United States. His writings are varied in kind and in subject-matter, ranging through lyric poetry, literary drama, theology, and prose fiction. His publications fill a rather large shelf, though many of them are deficient in force and apparently careless or at least hasty in phrasal construction. But the stories in *The Blue Flower* and in *The Unknown Quantity* are quite worthy of the praise that the public has accorded them. The little *Story of the Other Wise Man* has, as its title suggests, a Biblical background, and is told with dignity and impressiveness. While the style of van Dyke's prose is occasionally ruined with affectation, yet the content of his work is wholesome, and at times has been found inspiring.

Garland

Hamlin Garland has contended that one should write of only what he knows, and his own practice has fol-

lowed his requirement. Essays, novels, and short-stories have poured from his pen; but it is the short-stories that best represent what he has seen and actively shared in. Hamlin Garland's early life was spent upon what was then the frontier, — in Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Dakota. His stories are of frontier life in that region, though not entirely of its poverty, its grimness, its dullness, its overwork. Some critics have found Garland's work leaden-hued and that alone; but such critics cannot have read him very far. *His Main-Traveled Roads* and *Other Main-Traveled Roads* contain quite enough that represents emptiness of spirit, weariness of living, almost hopeless melancholy, and ferocious toil, but there is also in them much of homely humor, and much of enjoyment of life. It is difficult to believe that one who thinks of Hamlin Garland as always somber and depressing can have read "Among the Corn-Rows," "The Creamery Man," "William Bacon's Man," or "Elder Pill, Preacher." Garland's work cannot be said to have in high degree the quality of literary elegance, but it has, in the short-stories, the quality of convincingness, and much of it is very entertaining.

While Gertrude Atherton is best known for her Atherton journalistic work and for her novels, especially *The Conqueror*, a story of Alexander Hamilton, yet her short-stories of the life in the California of the days before its acquisition by the United States deserve and in time, it is not unsafe to predict, will secure a large and interested audience. The most unique of these short-stories are in the volume with the attractive title *The Splendid Idle Forties*. Whether they accu-

rately reflect the California (where their author was born) of the old days does not matter, — Homer's *Iliad* does not accurately reflect the old days of Greece and the Troad, but it is none the less interesting and valuable. Gertrude Atherton in 1917 published a volume of essays entitled *The Living Present*, and dedicated "To Eternal France."

Deland

The short-stories (some consider them novelettes) in Margaret Deland's *Old Chester Tales*, published in 1899, put their author upon a plane of favorable comparison with any writer of narrative of her time. Some of the characters in these stories are among the most attractive in American fiction. Amid so much contemporary literature leading to disquietude of mind and heart, it is richly satisfying to read these wholesomely stimulating tales.

Freeman

"I think the Lord must have thought a good deal of common people," said President Lincoln, "he made so many of them." There are many common people in the tales of Mrs. Mary Eleanor Wilkins Freeman, nearly all of them New England women. Whether they were thought much of by their creator, it is not possible to say, but they were thought much about. Mrs. Freeman is one of the very few good writers who can do their work without much revision, because she is so careful to plan and think through to smallest detail her stories before she pens them. In temperament Mrs. Freeman resembles Hawthorne, gloomy, brooding, though not quite morbid, more strongly affected even than he by the sordidness, the pathos, and the tragedy of the narrow, distorted life of the unintelligent New England Puritans and their country-bred descendants.

She is scrupulously exact in her workmanship, but lacking in the sure stylistic touch of her master. Her stories are distinctly New England in setting, and limited almost exclusively to the vainly struggling, desperately suffering, but, amid it all, unreasoning characters of rural life. She does not display the bitter hostility to the conditions of life surrounding her village and country characters which is characteristic of Hamlin Garland in his stories of the Middle-West farming communities. Mrs. Freeman is more evenly somber than Garland, less willing to break out in flashes of genial humor than he,—a Hamlin Garland in a Hawthorne environment, and, partly because of the environment, perhaps, a greater writer. Her novels, *Pembroke* (which is her best), *The Portion of Labor*, *The Shoulders of Atlas*, and one or two others of less note, are sufficient to illustrate her spirit and her accomplishment in style and in delicately energetic, almost profound, character-drawing. Her short-stories, however, have brought her the larger audience, chiefly because they do not require so long sustained a concentration of fascinated and yet often unwilling attention as the novels, and because they are somewhat more ingenious in incident and plot than they. The short-stories in *A New England Nun and Other Stories*, in *Silence and Other Stories* (especially "The Little Maid at the Door" and "Evelina's Garden"), and in *The Wind in the Rose-Bush and Other Stories of the Supernatural* are among the most artistic and the most pathetically moving stories in American literature.

One of New England's most successful story writers is Miss Alice Brown, — of Boston now, though Brown

her birthplace and childhood home was in New Hampshire. She has written poetry, novels, travel glimpses, a ten thousand dollar prize play, and at least two collections of excellent short-stories, *Meadow-Grass* and *Vanishing Points*. The first of these collections brought the breath of country air to its readers, and the second concerned itself chiefly with members of over-cultivated city society. We could not spare the first; and the second leaves us better informed and soberly thoughtful. In *Vanishing Points* is the unmistakable influence of Henry James, with that analysis which takes one step beyond that which before had been the vanishing point. Even the phraseology of James is present at times in the book, but this naturally accompanies the method of psychological analysis.

James
Oppenheim

Pay Envelopes, by James Oppenheim (not E. Phillips Oppenheim, the Englishman, we always are careful to insert), is one of the best books of short-stories written in this country. Its scenes are laid in and about a great eastern manufacturing center. The aspirations, the impulses, the bitter struggles, the pleasures, too, of the factory and mill employees are here better related than in any other American fiction. James Oppenheim has not done anything else so good, nothing so unchangeably valuable, — but it is a constant hope that he will “come back.”

Page

Thomas Nelson Page was born and lived while a boy in the region of Virginia where much of General Grant's terrible struggle for the breaking down of the Southern Confederacy occurred. Page's father was a major in the army of General Lee. Thomas Page himself began his public life about ten years after the

war, in the practice of law. Ten years of the law was sufficient to give him part of the training which has made him so excellent an ambassador to Italy during the present war.

Page has written a large shelf-full of books, and is considered one of the leading novelists of the South. The novels, with but one exception, were published after 1890. *Red Rock* (1891) has made it evident that he has the power to write admirably this longer form of fiction. But the novels have not found such favor as have his short-stories. The short-stories published in 1896, especially "Marse Chan," "Unc' Edinburg," and "Meh Lady," are among the masterpieces of literature interpreting the negro. These tales take us into the very heart of the war, not merely into that of the old plantation days or that of the days of reconstruction as do most of the stories of the life of the South. In fine and subtle lines Page draws the characters of plantation owners and soldiers and slaves and freedmen. His attitude of mind toward slavery is thoroughly sound and perfectly well-balanced, yet over the benevolent life of the plantations with which he was vividly familiar he throws the softening air of wistful and regretful memory.

It is not easy to speak in unrestrained terms of O. Henry, because he is, even now after his death, the most popular of all short-story writers. Everybody, from the school-boy to his "high-brow" professor, appears to be enamored of O. Henry. Ex-Premier Asquith has asserted that O. Henry is his favorite, and University librarians confess that no other writer's books are so widely circulated. Stephen Leacock, the

"The
Amazing
Genius of
O. Henry"

Canadian humorist, can scarcely contain himself for admiration when he writes of the Amazing Genius of O. Henry. William Sydney Porter seems to have been born at Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1867, though several towns claim the honor of having been his birth-place. He went to Texas and there worked upon a ranch, as one should, and then in a newspaper office, and soon owned a paper at Austin. The newspaper which came under his control he called *The Rolling Stone*. O. Henry also worked in a bank for a time, and then drifted down into Central America. He returned to Texas, to clerk (for two weeks) in a drug store. Next we find him in New Orleans, writing for the daily press. Later his permanent residence for the nine years preceding his death was New York City. Here he accomplished his finest work, such volumes of short-stories as *The Four Million*, *The Voice of the City*, and *The Trimmed Lamp*, — or, are *Options*, *Strictly Business*, *Whirligigs*, and *Roads of Destiny* the better books? And yet many have maintained that the stories in *The Gentle Grafters* are best of all! Central America, The South and West, and New York City (which he loved to call Bagdad-on-the-Subway) furnished the settings for most of his stories, — two hundred and fifty-two in all; and perhaps the best single story is the one in *Strictly Business* entitled "A Municipal Report."

Why so
Popular?

Upon what does O. Henry's popularity rest? Upon at least four things: (1) His fearless revelations of the pettiness of pretense in all life, high and low and all that lies between; (2) his honest and open admiration for the romantic elements in life; (3) his fresh-

ness and directness in the use of language; and (4) his exaggeration of both the humorous and the pathetic. Add to these his marvelous gift for plot and for surprise, and we find him not merely popular alone, but an excellent artist as well. Long may his books live! And yet they *may* not live very long, because they deal almost exclusively with the transient in immediate setting and in speech.

James Lane Allen is a native of Kentucky, born there in 1849. He taught school and college classes for several years; but since 1884 has given himself to literary work. "In so far as literature is concerned, experience has taught me and has always compelled me to see human life as set in Nature; finding its explanation in soil, and sky, and season; merely one of the wild growths that spring up on the surface of the earth amid ten thousand of others." Thus he wrote, and his stories of old and new Kentucky are illustrations of this asserted belief of his, — except that he takes humanity a little more seriously than to consider it merely a "wild growth" with all the irresponsibility which such a character would imply. Man in his setting of earth and sky and season, yet man within society, is Mr. Allen's object of interest.

Allen is a novelist as well as a short-story writer, *The Choir Invisible*, *The Reign of Law*, and *The Mettle of the Pasture* ranking high among the productions of our southern novelists. Two little books with the life of birds as starting-point have been accorded strong public approval, *A Kentucky Cardinal* (1894) and *The Kentucky Warbler* (1918). Seekers for sensations in fiction have expressed disappoint-

ment with this latest of his writings, though he who loves a classic style will find the book a thing of beauty. But undoubtedly the volume entitled *Flute and Violin, and Other Kentucky Tales and Romances* is that by which he is chiefly to be remembered, for, if for no other reason, within it is the inimitable story of the "Two Gentlemen from Kentucky." This story should not be described or outlined; not one bit of its charm and excitement and originality of incident and of character should be taken away from the reader by any telling beforehand of what is in the story. Another story by Allen, "King Solomon of Kentucky," should be read by every one who loves the heroic in life, wherever found.

James Lane Allen has much of the attitude of scientist and of philosopher toward nature; but above all it is human life which is most appealing to him and to those who take delight in following him. Perhaps he is, at times, too ardently addicted to expressing his teaching instinct, surviving from the earlier days, and to much polishing of his style. But his work is strong, and beautiful, and wholesome.

A Few
Others

Our bede-roll would be deplorably deficient if mention were not made of Edwin Lefevre's "The Woman and Her Bonds" in his *Wall Street Stories*, of Robert Herrick's *The Master of the Inn*, and of F. Marion Crawford's *The Upper Berth*. Nor is it possible to refrain from commending the rather too academic but none the less promising stories of Mrs. Anne C. E. Allinson in her volume *Roads from Rome*. It is the occasional ability of a writer or teacher to make the characters of ancient days seem contemporary that

keeps alive our faith in the large importance of so-called classical studies.

Born into life!—'tis we,
And not the world, are new;
Our cry for bliss, our plea,
Others have urged it too—

Our wants have all been felt, our errors made before.

In *Roads from Rome* Mrs. Allinson has included six stories, "sketches" she calls them, concerned with characters from the time of Julius Caesar to that of Hadrian. In these pages, Horace, Virgil, Ovid, Maecenas, Catullus, and other more and less known men of classical antiquity truly live for us. There would be more culture abroad in the land if more of literature of this quality were available to the aspiring student.

The Ancient
World
Revived

The Novelette.— The novelette is an old form of literature, reaching back to the *Book of Esther*, by an unknown Hebrew author, to *Daphnis and Chloe*, by Longus, a Greek, and to *Cupid and Psyche*, by Apuleius, a Latin. The form was continued in the middle ages, its best example being *Aucassin and Nicolette*, by an Old French author whose name is not known, and containing almost the first breath of the Renaissance spirit in literature. Then came *The Liberal Lover*, by Cervantes; and in Eighteenth century English literature *The Vicar of Wakefield*, by Goldsmith, and *Rasselas*, by Dr. Johnson. Novelettes were rather frequent in English during the Nineteenth century, none of them better than Dickens's *Christmas Carol*,

Ancient

Mediaeval

Modern

Mrs. Gaskell's *Cousin Phyllis*, and the three stories in George Eliot's *Scenes of Clerical Life*. This brings us to the later days of literature in America, when the novelette became a very important, though not, in excellent examples, a very frequent form of fiction.

What it is

The novelette has been difficult to define. Nearly all who have undertaken to say anything of it have confined their descriptions and definitions to a discussion of its comparative length or brevity. It is, they all say, usually longer than the short-story and shorter than the novel, — a thing, then, of middle magnitude, a sort of middle sister to the other two forms of prose fiction. But on the basis of such a distinction as that of length or brevity, one might as well speak of the two or three act play as a dramalette or dramolet, which no one appears anxious to do. There are other and better distinctions; such as that the novelette affords more scope for the development of character than does the short-story, though for the development of fewer characters than the novel can compass. The novelette, too, may divide itself into parts, thus resulting in a more imposing structure than the short-story. It should be more "taut and trim," however, than a novel, not indulging at all in digressions or episodes. And perhaps the nature of the purpose or of the theme or of the experience from which the story grows determines that the novelette shall be what it is, — something not either short-story or novel. A biological analogy which has been suggested as the basis of distinction is as good as any; that the seed or germ from which the novelette grows determines that it shall be neither flower nor tree, but a shrub.

In American literature there have been many popular novelettes during recent years, not the least popular of them being Eleanor Hallowell Abbott's *The Sick-a-bed Lady* and *The White Linen Nurse*, and Irving Bacheller's *Keeping Up with Lizzie*. But these have been inferior to somewhat earlier successes, such as Francis Hopkinson Smith's *Colonel Carter of Cartersville*, Henry James's *The Lesson of the Master*, Mrs. Ruth McEnery Stuart's *Napoleon Jackson*, *The Gentleman of the Plush Rocker*, Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage*, Francis Marion Crawford's *A Cigarette-Maker's Romance*, Herman K. Viele's *The Inn of the Silver Moon*, Kate Douglas Wiggin's *The Old Peabody Pew*, and Mrs. Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome*. In fact, the last of these has been acclaimed the strongest bit of American authorship of the present time.

The
American
Novelette

F. Hopkinson Smith, a native of Baltimore, was a painter and a lighthouse architect before he became a writer of note. He has written several novels, one of which, *Caleb West*, — *Master Diver*, will long be remembered. But his novelettes, *Colonel Carter of Cartersville* and *Colonel Carter's Christmas*, are his bid for even longer fame. The first is a most attractive picture of the old regime in the South, and the second only a little less attractive. Both are rather rambling in structure, especially the second. It seems a little surprising that a civil engineer could be satisfied with a loose-jointed piece of building, even in a literary structure; and it is the lack of carefully constructed plot which makes these brief bits of fiction among the

Smith

less artistic of American novelettes. But Colonel Carter himself is beyond praise for charm.

Henry
James

The reader interested in the life of art instinctively finds his way, at some time, into the work of Henry James. Henry James belongs almost entirely to the period immediately preceding ours, and yet we must mention here those incomparable long-short-stories or novelettes of his, *The Lesson of the Master* and *The Madonna of the Future*. They are only for the thoughtful lover of books, and they are not easy to read; but to some readers, lack of ease of interpretation is no bar to pleasure, — they delight to be called upon to think.

Mrs. Stuart

Mrs. Ruth McEnery Stuart is one of that immortal company of American story-tellers who have at times made their special study and delight the negro and the general environment of the South, where the negro is an outstanding figure. F. Hopkinson Smith, Joel Chandler Harris, Thomas Nelson Page, James Lane Allen, Sarah Barnwell Elliot, George W. Cable, O. Henry, Mrs. Sherwood Bonner MacDowell, Mrs. Louise Clark Prynelle, Miss Martha Young, Harry Stillwell Edwards, Richard Malcolm Johnston, Mrs. Virginia Fraser Boyle, Paul Laurence Dunbar, — and there are many more, — have found the negro finely susceptible of literary treatment. Few of these authors have been more highly amusing than Mrs. Stuart, and few have dealt more thoughtfully with the humor and pathos of the old plantations.

The negro in American literature has become well worth the investigation of the student who desires entertainment and the pleasure of pursuing something unique in the field of art, for the treatment of the

negro is one of the most distinctive features of our literature in comparison with that of Europe, — in any event, the American negro is not found abroad. Mrs. Stuart's *Napoleon Jackson* and her *Lamentations of Jeremiah Johnson* make an excellent introduction to this province of literature.

The Great War has renewed an interest in the stories of Stephen Crane, especially his *Red Badge of Courage*. Crane's stories were nearly all highly colored, and his heroes usually little less than mindless, or empty-minded, anyway, but in *The Red Badge of Courage* he achieved one of the most remarkable of all studies of the mind of the soldier in action. The book was immensely popular immediately after its publication in 1895, and has not yet been surpassed in the handling of its peculiar subject-matter by any of the writers of fiction of the present war. The battle of Chancellorsville, during the war between the States, is the scene of its action, and the psychological analysis, in simplest terms, of the country boy who there underwent his baptism of blood and iron and fire, will be of lasting value.

Stephen Crane

Mrs. Edith Wharton would have come close to the heart-interest of this generation if only for her self-sacrificing devotion to the needs of fair shining France when that suffering country was upon the brink of destruction during the World War. She is a notable figure in literature. She is one of the numerous authors who have been taught much by Henry James and have spread wide his influence. Perhaps those authors would never have found out precisely how to do some of the bits of almost miraculous presentation.

Edith
Wharton

which so sharply sketch that which has come directly within the angle of their vision, had it not been for Henry James. Mrs. Wharton is easily, together with Owen Wister in his later work, one of the first disciples of the great master. She is a novelist, as well as a writer of short-stories and of novelettes, and her character of Lily Bart in *The House of Mirth* has been compared with Thackeray's Becky Sharp and George Eliot's Gwendolen Harleth, — a high compliment, indeed! And yet at least one of her novelettes is a greater piece of work than this novel. That greater work is *Ethan Frome*, a stark and terrible story of a New England love affair more hopeless and bitter than a thousand deaths. It is wonderfully told. Another novelette, *Madame de Trêymes*, is a subtle tale of the struggle of several, but especially two, Americans with the unbreakable bonds of French society and family tradition.

Crawford

No example of this interesting type of fiction, the novelette, easily finds a place above F. Marion Crawford's *A Cigarette-Maker's Romance*, an alluringly pathetic story of a Russian nobleman exiled to Munich, Germany, and suffering from certain illusions which alternately exalt and humiliate his sensitive, yet truly noble, spirit. But Crawford must be reserved for the pages upon the novelists of to-day.

Tarkington

Booth Tarkington, also, is now a novelist of fame, though the fine craftsmanship of an early story, a novelette called *Monsieur Beaucaire*, has not been equalled in the later novels. *The Turmoil* is an absorbing novel, but its style is careless, — busy, noisy, undisciplined. *Penrod*, too, amused a vast number, but it is

only necessary to read a page of it and compare with Aldrich, Howells, or even Charles Dudley Warner or Charles D. Stewart to feel that Tarkington is doing perishable work. But *Monsieur Beaucaire*, a romance laid in the old city of Bath, England, excels the fineness of workmanship of many British authors upon their own ground. It is one of the books which time cannot destroy.

The Novel. — No task is more difficult than to choose the greater American novelists of this century. One is "playing safe," however, when he selects Silas Weir Mitchell, W. D. Howells, Mark Twain, Robert Grant, Francis Marion Crawford, Margaretta Wade Campbell Deland, Kate Douglas Wiggin, Owen Wister, David Graham Phillips, William Allen White, Frank Norris, Winston Churchill, Anne Sedgwick, and Ellen Glasgow. This is by no means an arrangement in the order of climax, but in the order of birth, Weir Mitchell being born in 1829 and Ellen Glasgow in 1874.

Our
Novelists

S. Weir Mitchell was a Philadelphia physician, a specialist in nerve disorders, who found relief from his exacting professional life in writing several entertaining novels, among which *Hugh Wynne*, *Free Quaker* stands foremost, and perhaps *The Adventures of Francois* a close second. *Hugh Wynne* is a story of the time of the War for Independence, and *The Adventures of Francois* of the time of the French Revolution. Mitchell's many books are sane and wholesome, if not altogether beautiful in their graceful style and optimistic tone.

Weir
Mitchell

A Serious
Humorist

The great book of Mark Twain's later days was the *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*. This is a chronicle of the Maid of Orleans who saved France at one of the most critical moments of that devoted country's existence. While the book is based upon old records and memoirs and is true to the historical character of its heroine, yet it is in reality a historical romance, thus belonging rather to fiction than to history. This book added much force to the easily questioned claim of those who maintain that Mark Twain is the greatest of American men of letters.

"The dean of
American
letters"

William Dean Howells as well as Mark Twain belongs to a generation ago, and he has not in this day equalled the quality of his work before 1890, excepting in one point, — *The World of Chance* (1893) contains the strongest and best portrait of a woman in all of Howells's books. There is much autobiography in this book. It should be read by every young man ambitious to break into the world of publication. *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890) is a characteristic New York story, nearly in its author's best vein, and *The Flight of Pony Baker* (1902) is a captivating boys' story. In general, it may be said that Howells is no better workman in these later books than in his earlier, and some have thought that he has become more seriously involved in social problems than his talents for solving them warrant. Yet he remains the most representative of American novelists of recent time.

Robert Grant

Among the many lawyers, or those who began their careers as lawyers, who have found the profession of literature more congenial or more insistently demand-

ing their gifts, Judge Robert Grant of Boston is one of the most distinguished. Another Bostonian whom the law has "lent to literature" is F. J. Stimson, widely known by his pseudonym of "J. S. of Dale," but Stimson belongs in his best work to the days before 1890. Robert Grant is a good essayist as well as a powerful novelist. His essays, as in the *Art of Living*, are refined, humorous, scholarly, attractively written, and, in fact, about all that excellent essays should be. His best known novel, *Unleavened Bread*, is a most biting satire upon the social climbers of nineteenth century America.

Francis Marion Crawford was a "prince of story-tellers." His purpose, as he put the matter in his *The Novel — What It Is*, was to amuse and interest the reader. He frankly asserted, too, that, as realism proposes to show men what they are and romanticism to show men what they should be, he would cast his lot with the romanticists; for "more good," he said, "can be done by showing men what they may be, ought to be, or can be than by describing their greatest weaknesses with the greatest art." Crawford early wrote a story with setting in east India, — *Mr. Isaacs*, it was called, — a crude but deeply interesting story. Three Italian stories he also wrote, — *Saricinesca*, (1887), *Sant' Ilario*, and *Don Orsino*. These three books constitute a trilogy (a single story made up of three separate stories); in this case, the story of a patrician family of modern Rome from 1865 to about 1888. *The Three Fates* (1891) should be read by every young man and woman who desires to pursue the life of authorship. These books come only short

Crawford

of being great books, and they have given their author as high a reputation away from America as at home.

Crawford was a man of genius, seeing and painting things as they are and making men see what they should be. He was not quite a great artist, for he was faulty in composition, building, construction. The reason for this faultiness is that Crawford attempted the writing of what is called the Epic Novel, the most difficult of all forms of prose literature to make a fine artistic construction because of the multitude of details which clamor for inclusion in any structure which attempts to be epic. The epic novel has been defined by "Calvin Winter" as "the type wherein a great social movement, a moral or political revolution drawing to a climax serves as the background of the story, while the destiny of some special group, some single family, some individual man or woman, closely interwoven with the progress of the general movement, forms the central thread of the plot, the focus of interest." Such an epic is *Saracinesca*, and its sequels. *A Cigarette-Maker's Romance*, a novelette already mentioned, is much slighter in importance of subject matter but more artistic in unity as it is also in charm. It is his most perfect story, so far as form is concerned, and most perfect also in its picturing of men and women in both elemental and conventional situations in life.

While F. Marion Crawford lived much abroad, yet he belongs to America, unqualifiedly, — as a nephew of the author of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic* should.

Margaret Deland is a native of Pennsylvania, but has lived in Boston since 1880. It was about that date Mrs. Deland began her career of authorship. Verse was the form of her first attempts; and then came the remarkable novel *John Ward, Preacher*, a book which thoughtfully, earnestly, and skillfully handled subjects of the greatest religious importance. If this book were still her best, her work might always suffer in comparison with a similar novel, *Robert Elsmere*, by the English novelist, Mrs. Humphrey Ward. But the short-stories in *Old Chester Tales* published in 1899, and the novels *The Awakening of Helena Richie* and *The Iron Woman* lifted her above any such flat comparison and placed her in the ranks of those who must be considered upon the ground of permanency. The two novels are bound together by the presence of some of the same characters in each. *The Iron Woman* has justly been pronounced to be the strongest in grasp upon the facts of life and in narrative power of any novel produced by an American woman. It is a vigorous work, reflecting the industrial life of Pittsburgh, and incidentally carrying with this a strong and beautiful love story. The book is full of evidence of great gifts of observation and of constructive imagination. Mrs. Deland is prevailingly bright and cheerful in the atmosphere with which she suffuses her work. She is capable of rich humor and of deep sentiment and strong pathos. She is, no doubt, at her best when the burning issues of modern life face her and her characters, — then she writes with an interest which has made her one of the most popular of living novelists, and with a directness of effect

Margaret
Deland

which carries conviction to those who are opposed to her thought. In 1918 Margaret Deland went to France to work in a canteen, as have many other eminent women of America.

Kate Douglas
Wiggin

Kate Douglas Wiggin was born in Philadelphia, lived during girlhood in rural New England, and at the age of eighteen removed for a period of residence to California. In youth, Kate Douglas Wiggin, according to her sister, was an assiduous reader, her "literary passions" being the *Arabian Nights*, *Scottish Chiefs*, *Thaddeus of Warsaw*, *Don Quixote*, Irving's *Mahomet*, Thackeray's *Book of Snobs*, *Undine*, *The Martyrs of Spain*, Shakespeare, and Dickens. She has always been interested in educational affairs, and was above all others responsible for the organization in this country of free kindergartens for poor children. But one needs now-a-days only to refer to *A Cathedral Courtship*, *The Birds' Christmas Carol*, *Polly Oliver's Problem*, *Timothy's Quest*, *Penelope's Experience* (carried through three books), and *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* to be sure of delighted attention from admiring readers. But *The Old Peabody Pew* is a story of more rare beauty than these.

Wister

Stories of college life seldom have merit. Students themselves are not, as a rule, sufficiently matured in the craft of writing to produce superior stylistic form, though they are astonishingly fertile in fancy and in strong, if crude, imagination. An occasional exception serves only to prove the rule. The practised writer, on the other hand, has shunned the field, or has been so smitten with the glamour of it within his memory that he does it the injustice of extravagant exag-

geration, though college life has formed an important feature of more than one successful novel, (as Dorothy Canfield's *The Bent Twig*), when presented as a lesser phase of the careers of their characters. One writer, however, attained a distinct success in his short-story of college life, *Philosophy Four*. This was Owen Wister, who has written also a biography of General Grant, and at least three well-known novels, the most tantalizing of the novels being *Lady Baltimore*, which, by the way, is the name of a kind of cake; not of a woman, and was first found in a Woman's Exchange! *Lady Baltimore* is Owen Wister's tribute to Henry James, for only a conscious disciple of James could have written it; no other sort of person could have done all this verbal skirmishing, — but the verbal minuets are Wister's own.

Owen Wister during the greatest of wars has served well his country by his *Pentecost of Calamity*. But the one book which caught the popular favor most securely is the story of a Wyoming cow-boy, told in his novel of *The Virginian*. It is a delightful story, one we would fain believe true. And it is a picture of life, a life that has gone forever, but a life that was none the less important and interesting because it was doomed to go, standing, as it did, in the path of progress, — the life of the cow-puncher, "the last romantic figure on our soil," as Wister himself has called him. The center of this picture, or of this tale of sundry adventures, is Cheyenne, Wyoming; but its soul is the heaven-born imagination of its author. One who has read chapters thirteen to sixteen will not forget them. And one who is old enough and has

wandered enough to have come into the company of the cow-boys of the last century re-lives the entrancing days which were passed in their presence. This is the kind of story the author could not help telling, because he saw its like in life itself. There remain few who can record similar things; and when the social history of America shall be written this book will be counted among the authentic documents.

Phillips

Almost a score of novels is our heritage from David Graham Phillips, who died before the full fruition of his powers. His was pioneer work, pioneer work in that it presents, with outspoken fearlessness, American life of to-day as seen directly by one whose ideal was the truth about the liabilities, not the assets, of the social life of the conventional "upper classes" of this nation. No one since Emerson has taught so strikingly that "It is as exact a truth as any in chemistry or mechanics that Aristocracy is the natural, the inevitable sequence of widespread ignorance, and Democracy the natural, the inevitable sequence of widespread intelligence. * * * The story of history, rightly written, would be the story of the march of Democracy, now patiently wearing away obstacles, accelerated there, now sweeping along upon the surface, again flowing for centuries underground, but always in action, always the one continuous, inevitable force. There has never been any more danger of its defeat than there has been danger that the human brain would be smoothed of its thought-bearing convolutions and set in retreat through the stages of evolution back to protoplasm."

Phillips was a reporter for the New York *Sun*, then London correspondent for the New York *World*. He also devoted himself to what were termed "muck-raking" articles for magazines; and then came his novels. He was an untiring workman. He said, "Every one of my books was written at least three times * * * and when I say 'three times' it really means nine times, on account of my system of copying and revision * * * I have writer's cramp every spring." He wrote for hours at a time, standing at a desk, usually during the night, turning out from six thousand to seven thousand words between ten o'clock and daylight. His nearly twenty novels averaged at least one hundred thousand words. Back of this industry were his intense moral earnestness, his eagerness for reform, and his belief that "the matter of giving life to the pages of a novel is the result of industrious study of human beings." There is an important principle underlying each one of his books, — such a principle as the biological one that man, as other animals, makes his best records under handicaps, or the social principle that the family is the unit of happiness.

His books are almost among the great books of the time — *The Great God Success*, *The Second Generation*, *Light-Fingered Gentry*, *Old Wives for New*, *The Hungry Heart*, *The Husband's Story*, and *The Grain of Dust*, to name only the best of them. No man, not even Carlyle, has ever shown more depth of hatred for shams than did David Graham Phillips. The unmasking of political and social shams was his mission, the "showing up" especially of the life of the "yellow rich;" and through all of his efforts to do this runs a

passionate advocacy of the Americanism^{*} which demands a working belief that civilization does not mean property but means men and women. Yet in all the diseases of the American body politic and social, with his characteristically American optimism he saw the sign of vitality. He believed in the curative power of illness. He was a "prophet of twentieth century unrest and reconstruction," a radical prophet, one "out for results."

All critics seem to agree that *The Second Generation* is the story with which to begin the reading of Phillips, as it is less likely than any other to arouse needless antagonism. This is a significant and inspiring story, — all agree to that, too. Yet the character drawing of Dorothy Hallowell in *The Grain of Dust* is the most faithful to life of any of his portraits of the women of to-day, accurate as they all are. One reading the delineation of Dorothy Hallowell inevitably recurs in his mind to the marvelous picturing done by Thackeray and by Balzac. And one knows the author as he reads the book. If strongly energetic yet unconsciously delicate revelation of the personality of the author constitutes literature, then *The Grain of Dust* is literature, and of a high order.

"What's the matter with Kansas?"

The leading function of William Allen White, a Kansas newspaper editor, has been the popular presentation of sound political principles through the medium of magazine articles, but he has also written many short-stories and one very remarkable novel. A visit to France in 1917 resulted in a volume under the title of *The Martial Adventures of Henry and Me*, giving an illuminating account of what

he saw and thought there. This book, with the exception of Dawson's *Carry On*, shows the hand of the master of a literary style more than any of the numerous war-books published before 1918. The "eloquent chronicler" of this history-making time does not appear as yet to have revealed himself. Among White's ten or a dozen publications in book form, one at least will be considered by the future historian of American social life as a document of highest value. The story of John Barclay in *A Certain Rich Man* is the story of American life on the western plains beginning in 1857, when Kansas was frontier, and ending in 1909 when the frontier could be found nowhere unless perhaps in our Asiatic islands. Strong types and sharply outlined individuals are in this great novel, as well as social and political and business background, and the author writes as one who has much to say and all is important. Few books are more persuasive.

Frank Norris, though born in Chicago, was taken by his emigrating family to California so early in his life that the greater impressions which embodied themselves in his novels were derived from the life of the west coast. Norris was trained in a newspaper office, writing thus, he said, for the *Plain People*. In his early fiction he showed the influence of Stevenson in *Moran of the Lady Letty* (his one purely romantic book) and the influence of Zola in *McTeague* (a study in heredity and environment which took four years to write). But Norris never in his work nor in his thought about his work quite distinguished between the chief methods of these two masters. "For my own part," he said (and he wrote fiction accordingly), "I believe that

The man who
almost wrote
"The Great
American
Novel"

the greatest realism is the greatest romanticism, and I hope some day to prove it." Norris wrote realistically, though not because he wanted to be a realist, as Zola did, but because he wanted to make evident to all his readers the *significance* of the real, for, said he, "Literature is of all the arts the most democratic."

Like David Graham Phillips, Norris was a pioneer in twentieth century literature, because, for one thing, he believed that the novel is something *essential* to modern civilization, — "Essential," he said, "because it expresses modern life better than architecture, better than painting, better than poetry, better than music. It is as necessary to the civilization of the twentieth century as the violin is to Kubelik, as the piano is to Paderewski * * * * It is an instrument, a tool, a weapon, a vehicle. It is that thing which in the hand of a man makes him civilized and no longer a savage, because it gives him a power of durable, permanent expression." The effect of such ideas as these, and of the work done in accordance with such ideas, particularly of the fine craftsmanship of that work, has been almost immeasurably great, not only upon the younger generation of novelists, but upon the older workers who have survived him.

Norris maintained that the novel is a greater moulder of public opinion and of public morals than is the press. "The press is read with lightning haste, and the morning news is waste paper by noon. But the novel goes into the home to stay. It is read word for word; is talked about, discussed; its influence penetrates every chink and corner of the family." But while Norris wrote for the people, he did not write for

popularity. He never truckled; never took off his hat to fashion and held it out for pennies. He was a realist for the sole reason that he believed it essential that people, "the People," hear, not a lie, but the truth, and that they should understand that truth.

Norris's aim was to write in prose fiction form the epic of our present national life. He planned three volumes for this purpose: *The Octopus*; *The Pit*; and a third, which was to have been named *The Wolf*, but which never saw the light, for he died at the age of thirty-seven, before he was able to put his plan into form. Wheat is the symbol of American life in these two volumes, as gold is in *McTeague*. *The Octopus* is the epic tale of the early western railroad, the road that brooked no competition, that fed upon the labor of men, destroying them, and yet feeding the world with the Titan wheat harvests of California valleys. All the "baseness and the grandeur, the sensuality and the spirituality" which accompany these gigantic operations is almost brutally set forth. Through "the iniquitous burden of extortionate freight rates, imposed like a yoke of iron" the railroad prevailed. "Men — motes in the sunshine perished * * * * *But the wheat remained.*" *The Pit* is the story of Chicago wheat traders and trading, inferior in "strength and brilliancy and lyric quality," as it is inferior in subject matter, to *The Octopus*, yet it has been more widely read, for the obvious if not very commendable reason that in *The Pit* men and women are more every-day and like unto our too conventional selves. As a great allegory *The Octopus*, though not worthy of being

styled the great American novel, is yet a landmark, a sign-post, on the way to that yearned-for achievement.

Churchill One of the most conscientious and assiduous of workers in the realm of the novel is Winston Churchill. He has spent three or four years upon almost every one of his books. Thackeray is his model; apparently his ambition has been to rise to the mid-Victorian height, though he is not at all likely now to reach it. His books in most instances are panoramic in scope, attempting surveys of large phases of American life. *Richard Carvel*, *The Crossing*, *The Crisis*, *Coniston*, *The Inside of the Cup*, are cases in point. The first three are historical novels, dealing, the first with the period of the War for Independence, the second with the period of the settling of the Middle West, and the third with the period of the Civil War, or shall we call it "the war for Southern independence?" *The Crisis* has been praised for its sketch of Lincoln, but surviving friends of the great President have asserted that the picture is very inadequate. *The Inside of the Cup* aroused much interest in its fearless arraignment of modern ecclesiastical religion, and for the moment gave its author undeserved reputation for profound religious insight. But the thought of the book was not constructed upon any new lines at all, and, as this fact became evident, interest soon waned. The best, the most graphically vigorous narrative of them all, is *Coniston*, the story of Jethro Bass, a New Hampshire political boss. If it has been less popular than *The Crisis*, this is the fault of the public and not of the author nor of his book. Mr. Churchill has been

more rapid in production of late, and his quality has fallen away correspondingly.

Anne Douglas Sedgwick (since 1908 Mrs. de Selincourt) has published at least seven volumes, one of which, *Tante*, has been widely circulated. Her latest volume is *The Encounter*, and is worthy of a larger audience than it has secured. It is of especial interest because, and perhaps solely because, it contains an intimate study of the personal side of the life of the German philosopher, Nietzsche. The picture here drawn of the much condemned thinker is not a repulsive one, but rather belittling. There are other characters in *The Encounter* who are well delineated, and the intricacies of the story are unforgettable. The book is not designed to attract a large number of readers. Its crudeness of structure, especially in details, makes it somewhat difficult to the average book-lover, and annoying to the more trained one. Still, that Mrs. de Selincourt fails to write, or refuses to write, after the manner of the general pattern of those who write fiction, does not by any means offset the usefulness of the attempt to induct the novel-reading public into the intimacies of the life of the world-troubling philosopher of world-banned Prussia.

The woman novelist of the South is Miss Ellen Glasgow, who was born at Richmond, Virginia, in 1874. With one exception her novels depict, by the epic method, the scenes and characters of the region with which life has made her familiar. That exception is *The Wheel of Life*, whose scene is in New York, and is practically a failure. Her other books fall into three groups, all of the groups held together as

one, however, by a common theme, that of marriage among different social "classes." The first group comprises two books, *The Battle-Ground* and *The Deliverance*; the second, also two, *The Voice of the People* and *The Romance of a Plain Man*, and in the third group one volume stands thus far alone, and is by far the best of the results of her masterly labors, — *The Miller of Old Church*.

These books are epical, like most of those of Norris and of Phillips, for they present as background and leading element of their content the life of a large community (of Virginia, or, at most, the "New South"), and then proceed to delineate the history of one or more families, and within these families the intimate personal careers of one or more individuals who are the most typical or symbolic of some aspects of the life of the large community involved. *The Battle-Ground* and *The Deliverance* are concerned respectively with the life of Virginia during the Civil War and the period of Reconstruction. *The Voice of the People* and *The Romance of a Plain Man* offer pictures of the rise, after the war, of the former white tillers of the soil, if not, indeed, the "poor white trash," and their assimilation or amalgamation with the impoverished "aristocrats" who in the time of distress find the noble qualities of the lower class not latent only but afire with ambition and with recognized achievement now that opportunity has ceased to pass them by. Next to *The Miller of Old Church*, Miss Glasgow's most lasting triumph is *The Romance of a Plain Man*. It is a closer and finer and stronger study of the inner development of individual character through a process

of self-education than any found in the two books of the first group or in the first book of the second; and it is a superb piece of story-building. However, it is not so likely to be closely examined by the social students of the future as are the books portraying the life of War and Reconstruction days. Those "novels of manners," as also *The Voice of the People*, bring forward more fully the circumstances of a society that is passing or has passed permanently away. Mr. Frederic Cooper is right in giving Ellen Glasgow the distinction of being the second American woman to succeed in writing a genuine epic novel, the first being, of course, Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe.

The literary principle of illustrating the universal through the particular is admirably exemplified by *The Miller of Old Church*, even though the setting is but the neighborhood of a little country community, old-fashionedly named Old Church. In the theme lies the universal element of this novel, — the struggle of the "lower classes" to forge upward, as they everywhere have done and continue to do. Yet the author also well meets in this book the demand of Frank Norris that, while the theme or purpose of a novel is to the story as the key-note is to a sonata, yet with the author of the novel as with the musician the leading interest must not be the theme, not the key-note, but the story. And it is the human story, the sheer story content and sequence, rather than the working of a great theme in human life, that makes this book to us, as it doubtless was to its author, her chief contribution to our literature.

There have been many other novelists since 1890, — Harold Frederic, with his *Damnation of Theron Ware*,

Who Now
Gives the
Greatest
Promise?

Edward Noyes Westcott, author of *David Harum*, Stewart Edward White, entertaining writer of the north woods and of Arizona deserts, and of Alaska and Africa, too, Paul Leicester Ford, Richard Harding Davis, Dorothy Canfield, Mary Johnston, Arthur Train, Henry Sydnor Harrison, Ernest Poole, and almost numberless others, some of whom should, possibly, not be nameless here. According to George Barr McCutcheon, John Fox, Jr., has written the novel with the best title in all American fiction, — *The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come*. The promise of Ernest Poole appears greater than that of any others of the younger authors of fiction at this date (1918), but there also appears the old danger that he will dissipate his gifts in over-production. Or is it Henry Sydnor Harrison who gives the greater promise? His *Queed* is a good story; one can hardly wait for the apparent tragedy to develop into comedy, so absorbing is the tale. He has a finer hand than has Poole, and carries on the more obvious literary traditions; there is, in fact, a touch of Dickens in the story. Yet we may not be amiss if we fix our faith upon neither of these, but upon Dorothy Canfield (Mrs. J. R. Fisher). She is a better writer than Poole, both in detail and in plot-construction, and she probes more deeply into the souls of her characters than does Harrison, — is much less superficial than he. *The Bent Twig* is a notable success. The social student cannot afford to pass by Ernest Poole; the student of the "New South" (and of the newspaper for that matter) cannot afford to leave Harrison unread; and in Dorothy Canfield we at last appear to have an author who understands the Col-

lege community, though that is, perhaps, the least important feature of her interesting book. The most important thing said in *The Bent Twig* is in Chapter XXXI and relates to elementary education. — “Perhaps all this modern ferment of what’s known as ‘social conscience’ or ‘civic responsibility,’ isn’t a result of the sense of duty, but of the old, old craving for beauty.” And who has better stated the actual function of our public school than Dorothy Canfield (Chapter VII)? — thus: “Those devouringly active little minds did not spend six hours a day in school without learning something incessantly. The few rags and tatters of book-information they acquired were but the merest fringes on the great garment of learning acquired by these public school children, which was to wrap them about all their lives. What they learned during those eight years of sitting still and not whispering had nothing to do with the books in their desks or the lore in their teachers’ brains. The great impression stamped upon the wax of their minds, which became iron in after years, was democracy—”

Our sketch would be sadly more incomplete than it now is, if we did not mention two other works of fiction. H. K. Viele’s *The Inn of the Silver Moon* is one of the most charming of foolish stories, high romance walking in the midst of familiar matter of to-day, a miracle of rare device; its author certainly on honey-dew hath fed, and drunk the milk of Paradise! *The Inn of the Silver Moon* is only a novelette, perhaps; but this cannot be said of Charles D. Stewart’s *Partners of Providence*, a real novel, rich with humor, astonishing for the keenness and breadth of its insight

and understanding, such a book as the world has waited for ever since Mark Twain's stories of river life. The book has come, and it is better than the world expected, for it is not an imitation of Mark Twain. It is an independent book, intensely interesting, immensely entertaining, — the kind of book that makes one feel that he knows man and the world better, and that acquiring the knowledge has been tremendously worth while.

III

THE DRAMATISTS

The American Stage.— It takes the critic to his wits' end to be sure that he is placing an unprejudiced estimate upon the printed plays of America. In brief, such an estimate would probably be that, from the point of view of the box office American drama has been a matchless success, but that as literature it has been embarrassingly inconsiderable. We have had many excellent playwrights, men who have known how to lay out thrilling and yet consistent plots and who have been able to manage the tactical details of play presentation almost to perfection. Bronson Howard, Clyde Fitch, William Gillette, Charles Klein, George H. Broadhurst, Augustus Thomas, Langdon Mitchell, David Belasco, George M. Cohan, — and there have been and are more. Among them Mr. Cohan is considered foremost as a maker of plays for the stage; but how far from the kingdom of letters! It is, in fact, doubtful whether a single play from the hand of any one of these men will be appraised as literature a half century hence, the doubt arising only because Fitch's *Beau Brummel*, Thomas's *The Witching Hour*, and Mitchell's *The New York Idea* are still read, even after the likelihood of their frequent revival in the theater has vanished. The first of these three plays is a good picture of an historical character who is still of interest; the second is a plea for a semi-popular psychic creed which features mental telepathy as one of its strongest points; and the third is our best comedy

Is it
American?

of manners. The reason for so little real drama from this group of playwrights is that they have not studied American life and brought it before the American people, but have given their attention to a small phase of that life, the metropolitan phase, and have presented it to cosmopolitans only. To be more specific, they have studied only the life of Broadway and its vicinity and have staged that for New Yorkers of all nationalities. Even though Clyde Fitch wrote about sixty-six plays and Augustus Thomas began a series of plays each to be entitled after some one of the Commonwealths of the Union (but getting no further than Colorado), yet their characters talk and live as the inhabitants of Manhattan Island alone talk and live.

With Acts
Many

Literary Prose Drama.— There are a few other playwrights who have been more successful with the library-table play; Mary Austin, William Vaughn Moody, Edward Sheldon, Edward Knoblauch, Charles Kenyon, Alice Brown, Percy Mackaye, George Middleton, and we might now include Charles Rann Kennedy, as he has taken steps toward naturalization since the entrance of our country upon the duties of the Great War. David Pinski, also, a Russian dramatist, author of *The Treasure*, appears to have begun the process of Americanization, and, if he continues it, will be eagerly claimed by us. All these have written plays of undoubted power and sincerity, not only in subject matter but also in manner of treatment, — and it is by treatment of his material, of course, that the artist stands or falls. And then we cannot overlook at least four writers of poetic drama, Josephine Preston Peabody (Mrs. Lionel Marks), Mrs. Olive

Tilford Dargan, Richard Hovey, and William Vaughn Moody.

Mary Austin, William Vaughn Moody, and Edward Sheldon have done with the drama what many of our short-stories have excelled in doing, namely, created a literature "of the soil." Mary Austin's *The Arrow Maker* is a play with a setting of western mountains and the tribal vicissitudes of the native Indians. It is true that the play does reveal the universal longing of Woman to have and to serve, but that it is a play distinctively American is, in this instance, more important. Plays a-plenty with material immensely varying from the material of this one have exhibited the same universal quality; but this material could have been found only upon our soil. Moody's *The Great Divide* and Sheldon's *The Nigger* are far more of the United States than is Zangwill's much praised *The Melting-Pot*. Moody's play represents setting and events in the Southwest, though there is much of New England in it, too, and Sheldon's represents setting and events in the Southeast, and all impossible elsewhere. But another prose play by Moody, *The Faith-Healer*, though less read because of its minimum of purely sensational appeal, is much superior to *The Great Divide*. Mr. William Archer, the distinguished English dramatic critic, has spoken of *The Faith-Healer* as the only American play of real psychological importance.

Edward Knoblauch's most successful experiment has been done in collaboration with Arnold Bennett, English playwright, essayist, and novelist, upon the drama entitled *Milestones*. This drama is famous as a unique experiment in technique, the authors carrying one

theme through the action and character revealment of three generations of one family, and doing it successfully, to the final confusion of the ancient dogma of the unity of time. The theme of this play could hardly be older, that human nature is the same yesterday, to-day, and tomorrow. Charles Kenyon's *Kindling* has excited great interest among students of social conditions. It is an over-idealized bit of work in its characterization, and is lacking in symmetry and proper emphasis of detail; yet it is strongly to be commended for its restraint in sentiment. Miss Alice Brown's *Children of the Earth*, a ten thousand dollar prize play, is an extraordinary study in many things that may be found in our national life if one will but turn his mind and eyes away from the great cities. The play has not been convincing to many readers of present-day drama, only because it is difficult for them to understand, much less to see for themselves, that there can be so great and so profound complexity of life in "the provinces." Some parts of this play are among the most ethereally beautiful passages in our literature, as we might expect from so accomplished a writer as Miss Brown.

The One-act
Play

The work of Percy Mackaye and of George Middleton takes us into the purlieus of that fine body of literature composed of one-act plays, so popular upon the European stage and so unfailingly attractive to the reader everywhere because of the perfection of dialogue and of structure from the hands of the greatest of the old-world dramatists of the past forty years. An occasional one-act play can be found here and there in the history of literature for many a year before the pres-

ent time, but it was not deemed specially important until the remarkable work of August Strindberg, the Swedish dramatist, gave it vogue in his thirteen diminutive dramas, or one-act plays. Strindberg was quickly followed in this relatively new literary form by Sudermann, Hofmansthal, and Maeterlinck upon the continent of Europe, and by William Sharp, Bernard Shaw, Stephen Phillips, James M. Barrie, Lord Dunsany, Lady Gregory, Yeats, Synge, Robinson, Masfield, Gibson, Phillpotts, and many others in the British Isles, and the one-act play, neither a dramatized short-story nor a compressed drama of the older type, but a distinct literary type, had come to remain.

Numberless one-act plays have been written in America of late years, and to select two or three authors as representative of the many who have written them is to be almost certain to reject others as worthy. Miss Marguerite Merington and Mrs. Evelyn Greenleaf Sutherland have won high reputation by their volumes of one-act plays. The *Picture-Plays* of Miss Merington make one of the cleverest of volumes of recent days. But Percy Mackaye and George Middleton are more worthy of notice, and not of that alone, but of careful study, though Mr. Mackaye does insist that it takes less effort to write ten one-act plays than one longer drama, — which is extremely doubtful, if the one-act play be as good as the best. Percy Mackaye's one-act plays in *Yankee Fantasies* are as likely, if not more than likely, to last as long as his loosely constructed and over-ornamented longer plays. Mackaye has a wide vocabulary and is a past master at phrasing, but he has not a great deal of dramatic

power. But *The Yankee Fantasies* are good in character presentation, really convincing as New England types, strictly and peculiarly American, almost actual individuals, though of rather eccentric sorts. They are not at all over-done, as his ambitious interpretation of early New England character in *The Scarecrow* certainly is over-done; and to one unacquainted with the real literature in the form of the one-act play they afford a delightful open door to such pleasing and important acquaintanceship.

George Middleton is our most accomplished writer in this particular form. His *Embers, and Other One-Act Plays* contains his ablest work. They are serious plays, "studies in consequences and readjustments," he has called them, further expressions of some preceding situations. They suggest that other dramatic situations have come before them and have led up to them, and that further dramatic, even tragic, situations would follow, if these playlets were actual life, as they seem almost to be. And this is the true art of the one-act play, that it is unitary in its effect, but, like conditions and situations in life, suggestive of what is never told.

Another successful writer of one-act plays is Percival Wilde. He has published three volumes of brief dramatic pieces, the most read of them being *Dawn and Other One-Act Plays of Life To-day* and *The Unseen Host and Other War Plays*. The title piece in the second of these volumes is based upon the incident of the Angels of Mons. More of Mr. Wilde's one-act plays are said to have been produced in "Little Theatres" than those of any other American author.

II

POETRY

II

POETRY

Poetic Drama. — There has been considerable hostile criticism of the poetic drama; usually, though, by authors who cannot produce anything poetic or by critics who know neither poetry nor the drama. The criticism has nearly always taken the form of saying that the poetic drama is not realistic and cannot be. But there is no essential difference between realistic and poetic drama. If poetry has been correctly defined when defined as passion of the soul, then many a realistic drama, whether written in prose or in verse, is packed with poetry; and, on the other hand, if the abiding characteristics of the human mind and heart abide because they are real, then many a poetic play is realistic. Many a poetic play contains world-old aspects of our frail yet strong, failing yet aspiring and achieving, human nature. There is much of this universally and abidingly real content of human life in Josephine Preston Peabody's *The Piper* and in her *Marlowe*. *Marlowe* is an attempt to rehabilitate the life of the Shakespeareans, and centers about Christopher Marlowe's song beginning "Come live with me, and be my Love." It is for the reader who is already equipped with a sense for the historic and for the force of allusion; it is not, perhaps, readily "understood of the people." But *The Piper* is

The Poetic
drama

Josephine
Preston
Peabody

for everybody, a simple and beautiful and world-wide application of the theme underlying the folk tale already so well told by Browning, the theme that not gold but love will purchase the precious things that we have once driven away from us by base selfishness and false promises. This author has written other books and dramas, but *The Piper* placed her high among American poets and among playwrights of everywhere. We shall elsewhere have occasion to discuss her as poet.

Olive Tilford
Dargan

Mrs. Olive Tilford Dargan, another author of poetic drama, appears, as George Eliot did, to crave to live in her mind a universal life. She has made her knowledge almost engirdle the world, and has reflected this unusual breadth of learning in her dramas. The ancient life of Mesopotamia; the life of Greece in the days of her struggles with the Persian, in her colonial era, and during the Crusades of mediaeval days; life in Central America, in Spain, in Russia, in middle-age England, in the United States, and in idealized times and places; — all these have yielded settings, background, atmosphere, and content for her numerous plays. All her plays are good, with the exception of the one prose play called *The Poet*, which is so poor that it should never have been printed. The strongest among them in point of mystery of life and of her art are *Semiramis*, *Lords and Lovers*, *The Siege*, *The Mortal Gods*, and *The Shepherd*. Mrs. Dargan imitates the Elizabethan dramatists, a most daring thing to do. But she has excellent historical insight and imagination, is a good story-teller, and, at times, writes poetry of very nearly transcendent merit.

Richard Hovey was the most ably and finely equipped of all recent Americans who have attempted the dramatic form. His aim was frankly to create poetry rather than stage plays. The delicately wrought dialogue of his four Arthurian dramas (he had planned nine) is beyond the mouthing of the stage. In these dramas Hovey played upon an instrument of many strings, and this instrument speaks best to one who listens with the inner ear of the soul. "All music is what awakes from you when you are reminded by the instruments," — true to the last word this is when one reads the dramas of Hovey, for one forgets author, subject, story, and the incomparable technique of verse while the music of many of their passages takes swift and complete possession of the spirit of the reader. But we shall revert in the following pages to this series of dramas, to which Hovey gave the general title of *Launcelot and Guenevere*.

Richard
Hovey

William Vaughn Moody's three poetic dramas, *The Firebringer*, *The Death of Eve*, and *The Masque of Judgment*, must not be over-looked by the student of our literary drama. The last named of these is lofty poetry. While one will not venture upon a comparison with the poetry of Milton, yet *The Masque of Judgment* inevitably suggests the tone, the thought, and the imaginative vision of, not Milton's *Comus*, but *Paradise Lost*.

William
Vaughn
Moody

Chiefly Lyrical. — If we admit to the company all who write verse, there are in the elect body of poets in this country more than four hundred, — a good many more. The number who sit at the banquet tables of the Poetry Society is, — not quite legion. Yet a few

A Goodly
Fellowship

only are feasting far up the slopes of Parnassus. But to offer a selection of the arrived or nearly arrived few is to invite denunciation and harangue.

The Glorious
Company

However, no one will be disposed to quarrel if we say there should be *included* in such a selection the following: Eugene Field, John Banister Tabb, James Whitcomb Riley, Edwin Markham, George Edward Woodberry, Richard Hovey, Madison J. Cawein, Frederick Lawrence Knowles, Cale Young Rice, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Frank Dempster Sherman, Lloyd Mifflin, Alan Seeger, Edith M. Thomas, Lizette Woodworth Reese, Olive Tilford Dargan, Josephine Preston Peabody, Anna Hempstead Branch, William Vaughn Moody, Mary McNeil Fenollosa, and Gertrude Hall.

There are others whose work was so nearly complete before 1890 that we omit them save by name, — Joaquin Miller, Phillips Brooks, Henry Cuyler Bunner; and here rather than in the list above belongs James Whitcomb Riley, too, excepting for a very few of his better poems. The life of John Greenleaf Whittier did not come to an end until September 7, 1892, and between 1890 and a few weeks before his death a dozen or more poems of merit came from his still singing spirit. His last poem, written "at sundown," is the verses to Oliver Wendell Holmes ending, in the last two stanzas, thus beautifully and in harmony with the entire life of their author, —

The hour draws near, howe'er delayed and late,
When at the Eternal Gate
We leave the words and works we call our own,
And lift void hands alone

For love to fill. Our nakedness of soul
Brings to that Gate no toll;
Giftless we come to Him, who all things gives,
And live because He lives.

And there are still others who give or have given promise rather than, as yet, fulfillment, among them Clinton Scollard, Sara Teasdale, Louise Imogen Guiney, Helen Gray Cone, Florence Earle Coates, George Sterling, John G. Neihardt, Harriet Monroe, Arthur Guiterman, Angela Morgan, and others who, along with some of these, think they possess new theories about poetry, but who after all are quite conventional "practitioners" of poetry, — in their best work. These last "others" are Edgar Lee Masters, Vachel Lindsay, Amy Lowell, Robert Frost, Edward Arlington Robinson, and John Gould Fletcher. If one will turn to page 239 of Miss Amy Lowell's *Tendencies of Modern American Poetry*, he will find there, in the chapter on "Imagists," the creed of those who write the "New Poetry," as they term it. But to a student of literary criticism that creed is strangely old, its chief features having been most notably set forth by Wordsworth at the time he and Coleridge published their *Lyrical Ballads*. Those who know nothing about poetry and those who know much about it do not consider the "new poets" as of much importance excepting, as we have said, in their more "conventional" work. It is only those who know a little, but not much, about poetry who exalt their humdrum efforts.

A distinctively western poet was Eugene Field; so much so that though eastern editors tried hard to en-

tice him even to New York city, he felt that Chicago was as far east as he could go for fear that residence farther east would, as he said, squeeze out of what he wrote much of the genuine literary flavor. There was not, however, a great deal of literary flavor in most of his work. It was nearly all mere day to day filling for newspaper columns. His verse is chiefly of the humorous column type, but it was the very best of that type. It is only for a few poems that we can agree with the biographical note in Stedman's *American Anthology* that "this rare and original minstrel of the West was the Yorick of American poetry, childhood's born laureate, and no less a scholar by nature than a man of infinite humor, and of inimitable, if sometimes too eccentric, jest."

Eugene Field was a native of St. Louis, Missouri, born there in 1850. He was educated in New England, Illinois, and Missouri schools, and engaged in newspaper work at St. Louis, St. Joseph, and Kansas City, Missouri, and at Denver, and finally, until his death in 1895, on the *Chicago Daily News*. His least sophisticated, least conventional, and therefore most distinctive verse was written before 1890, — the ever popular *Little Boy Blue*, for example, in 1887, though this is more self-conscious and sophisticated than the verses written for the *Denver Tribune* before 1882. *A Little Book of Western Verse*, so delightfully Fieldian, appeared in 1889, as did also a book of prose entitled *A Little Book of Profitable Tales*.

The immediate demands of those whose reading is almost exclusively of the daily journals was what Field wrote to satisfy. This is not to say that therefore his

poetry is poor, for the newspaper audience is a very respectable audience not only in size but in general intelligence. Still, nearly all that he supplied for this demand was light literature. In his later years Field appealed a little more directly to more "cultured" readers by the poems which reflected his studies in Old English ballads and in Latin literature. But it is the sentimental, though wholesomely sentimental, poems such as *Little Boy Blue*, and such unfailingly charming fairy-child poems as *Wynken, Blynken, and Nod* that make him live on for us. *The Sugar-Plum Tree*, too, and *Pittypat and Tippytoe*, *Little Blue Pigeon*, *The Rock-a-By Lady*, *The Ride to Bumpville*, and *The Shut-Eye Train* will, without doubt, delight children, little and large, always. Many of Field's children's poems have been set to music, and their perpetuation thus further insured.

John Banister Tabb, who died in 1900, was an educator in Maryland, and wrote brief lyrics which have been keenly admired by lovers of thoughtful directness and exquisite finish in verse. A volume published in 1894 and another in 1897 contain his most artistic production. *The Water Lily*, *To Shelley*, and *The Druid* are often quoted from these volumes. Moral and religious devotion, and yet freedom of the spirit to express itself in its individual rightness, distinguish the poems of this careful and earnest devotee of both religion and art.

Father Tabb

James Whitcomb Riley is, as we have said, a survivor of earlier days, though a few later poems, such as the sonnet to *Longfellow* which was published in 1892 (an earlier one was written with the same title), sur-

Riley

pass most of his verses which we so trippingly recite from our childhood memories.

From
Pedagogue
to Poet

Markham

The schoolmaster's profession has supplied to literature almost as many recruits within the past few decades as the law supplied during the period of national expansion before 1890. Of those who have been graduated from chair at desk to book upon its top, Edwin Markham is one with the greater reputation. A descendant of the Penn family, and directly sprung from pioneers emigrating from Michigan to Oregon, he became a hard-working teacher, principal, and superintendent in the schools of California. The financial success of *The Man with the Hoe* made it possible for him to take up the profession of letters and give to it exclusive attention. This poem, suggested by a painting by J. F. Millet, is not accorded by its author the first place among his many poems. That distinction belongs to his "Lincoln," published in *Lincoln and Other Poems* in 1900. Yet George Hamlin Fitch in *Great Spiritual Writers of America* makes the high claim for *The Man with the Hoe* that it is "the finest thing that has been produced in American literature since the Civil War." A third book, *The Shoes of Happiness and Other Poems*, appeared in 1915. The title poem is a fascinating tale of Constantinople and the East, but too obviously indebted to John Hay's *The Enchanted Shirt* to be in any sense original as a story. Its descriptive passages, however, are vivid and colorful. "Virgilia," in the same volume, is a poem of much greater merit. Markham has been acclaimed "the greatest poet of the social passion." This estimate, as that of George Fitch, just quoted, is an exaggerated

one ; but that a tonic pleasure, even a life-transforming power, has been derived by many from some of the poems of Mr. Markham is beyond question ; and, though he was born in 1852, his latest volume gives no sign that his natural strength has abated.

We are on safe literary ground when we open the pages upon which appear the poems of George Edward Woodberry. Professor Woodberry is bold enough to attempt to express much which he himself has termed "inexpressible ;" hence his verse, while intellectually invigorating, is not often of absorbing interest to the casual reader. Poems of love, poems of nature, poems for music's own sake, he has written ; but it is the poems purely in worship of the spiritually ideal that have claimed his rarer hours and have given him international fame and vogue. Woodberry has been compared with Shelley in temperament and with Tennyson in technique. He does show the passion in quest of the ideal which so strongly characterized Shelley and made him the superior poet of his day, but it is only a touch of Shelley's genius that possesses the American poet ; far inferior in power he is. Woodberry's indebtedness to Tennyson may be an unconscious one, but it is obtrusive in his work. Yet if he is at all an imitator we may be grateful that his model is an exalted one in art, for the uncritical and the critic who really knows have never questioned the artistically fine character of the skill of Tennyson. It is only the parvenu with little sense for the aesthetically winning who has girded at that art.

Woodberry's threnody, *The North Shore Watch*, is usually considered the most sincere and sympathetic

Another
Schoolman

Woodberry

of all this poet's verse. It is spiritually satisfying. Nevertheless, to-day when the English speaking nations are fraternizing as never before in their history, his two sonnets entitled *At Gibraltar*, and a third *America to England*, the country whom he hails as

Mother of nations, of them eldest we,—
Mother of our faith, our law, our lore,

are even more appealing, especially when the note struck at the end of the last-named sonnet is

Justice we love, and next to justice peace!

Still another
Teacher

Hovey

Among other professors of literature in American colleges who have become makers of literature, Richard Hovey is not one of the least. He has been called "a later Lanier." Undoubtedly his *The Laurel: an Ode*, published in 1889, was greatly influenced by Lanier. And later volumes, *Songs from Vagabondia*, written by Hovey and the Canadian poet Bliss Carman, and *More Songs from Vagabondia*, and, again, *Last Songs from Vagabondia*, are over-done in their zestful imitation of the vagrom spirit of Walt Whitman. But his *Seaward*, an elegy, is a poem of great beauty and exquisite point and finish; and his poetic dramas, already mentioned under the general title of *Lancelot and Guenevere* (1891-1898), planned as a cycle of nine dramas, but completed only through the fourth, are among the best of American poems. The Arthurian legends are here re-written with a bold and daring hand. The treatment is fresh and vital, though not so elevated in its imagination as that of the Tennysonian *Idylls of the King*. Hovey chose to re-tell the

more virile stories of Sir Thomas Malory, not those of Tennyson. Few critics hesitate to say that the fourth and last of these Arthurian dramas, *Taliesin: A Masque*, is not only the best of the group but is also one of the most inviting and engaging of literary dramas of this day. It is a story of the quest of the Grail by Percival, but, as George Meredith would say, "the narrative is nothing;" the profound thought of the poem and the excellent verse are the elements of it which stir and thrill him who is willing to follow in the path of metaphysics set to music. There is much of Swinburnian melody in the lines of this great poem, but the lift of them as they come, wave after wave, unto the end, makes one forget anything derivative, and breathlessly to rise with the author to the heights of

Joy like the joy of a multitude thrilled into one.

In 1898 Hovey published a volume, *Along the Trail*, containing battle-hymns suggested by the Spanish-American war. The hymn that stands by itself and foremost is "Unmanifest Destiny," a poem hopeful, comforting, and inspiring. In its last stanza the poem inevitably suggests Whittier's *Eternal Goodness*. This is to commend, however, and not to condemn, when one reads from Hovey

I do not know beneath what sky
Nor on what seas shall be thy fate;
I only know it shall be high,
I only know it shall be great.

The early death of Hovey (in February, 1900) was a nation's tragic loss, for he gave promise almost be-

yond expectation. As the success of Frank Norris in fiction lay partly in his failure, so the failures of Hovey in poetry only emphasized the greatness of his gifts.

The poet of
the Southern
Landscape

The relation of literature to life is closely exemplified in the poetry of Madison Cawein. Cawein was born, was educated, and resided at Louisville, Kentucky. He took to himself the heart of nature (or did she take him to her heart?) in that region; and the glory of the slumbrous landscape of the South, the loveliness of its detail in tree, and cloud, and flower, and in the life of man and of animal, are reflected in his books. The very titles of individual poems, "Wild Iris," "Heat," "Before the Rain," "To the Locust," "The Twilight Moth," "The Rain-Crow," "The Whippoorwill," "The Tree-Toad," "Feud," "Dead Man's Run," "Ku Klux," "The Moonshiner," "The Quest," "Old Homes," and the titles of his books, *Weeds by the Wall*, *Kentucky Poems*, *Myth and Romance*, *Undertones*, *The Garden of Dreams*, *Red Leaves and Roses*, more than suggest the sensitiveness of Cawein to his environment.

Story, and picture, and fanciful thought, and graceful lyric rhythm are his to use as he wills, — this lyrist of the seasons; and one who reads his poems knows that in his soul he has been in the fair southland, for here

Of honey and heat and weed and wheat
The day has made perfume,

and then

It's — Oh, for the gate and the locust lane
And dusk and dew and home again!

Frederick Lawrence Knowles has for several years been literary adviser of various Boston publishing houses. Despite his occupation as reviewer he is an optimistic writer; not so optimistic of the present as of the future, yet believing firmly that the forward flowing tide of time holds in trust much to be given into our hands in days not now far distant. Mr. Knowles, obedient to an aesthetic conscience, has edited an excellent *Golden Treasury of American Lyrics*, and has published two volumes of original poems, *Love Triumphant* and *On Life's Stairway*. No poems in these volumes are better than the sonnet "If Love Were Jester at the Court of Death;" but we are especially grateful to him for his insistence in another poem that in poetry we need

A reviewer
who is
Poet, too

that cosmic stuff
Whence primitive feeling glows,

and even more grateful for the added insistence that
this cosmic stuff shall have

Grown, organized to the needs of rhyme
Through the old instinctive laws,
With a meaning as broad as the boughs of time
And deep as the roots of cause,

Much of the "new Poetry" highly vaunted by those who know only a little of what poetry is and can do is void of meaning as it is void of organization, and void of organization so often because there is nothing to organize; all such poetry would seem, in the light of this demand, to be unacceptable to Mr. Knowles, even

though collections of "new poetry" have included some of his verse within their pages.

Rice

One of the writers who of late have come rapidly forward in public esteem is Cale Young Rice, whose wife, Alice Hegan Rice, is also a popular writer, though in prose fiction. Mr. Rice's latest volume, *Earth and New Earth*, came from the press after the outbreak of the War, and is of immediate interest because it voices, among other notes, the author's strong loathing of the militarism which has plunged the world into this frightful holocaust and voices also his aspiration toward a world citizenship after the war. The title poem, "Earth and New Earth," the group of poems entitled "Winds of War," and a one-act play called "Gerhard of Ryle," are born of artistic ideals and are of more than temporary value.

Dunbar

The foremost man of letters given to the world by the negro race of America is Paul Laurence Dunbar. The short-stories of negro life included in *Old Plantation Days* are admirable for their fresh excellence, and his better poems, as those in *Lyrics of Lowly Life*, are attractive wholly apart from the influence of a reader's sympathy with his race. Whether the admixture of white blood accounts for the success of the French mulatto Dumas and of the Russian mulatto Pushkin, one cannot tell; but in Dunbar, a man of pure African blood, there was the power to produce lyric literature commanding the respect of all his contemporaries in England and America. Not every one who reads Dunbar agrees with W. D. Howells that the most commendable of his poems are those which study the

moods and traits of his race in its own accent of our English. Some decidedly prefer the lyrics "Ere sleep comes down to soothe the weary eyes," "A Summer's Night," and the sonnet "To Harriet Beecher Stowe." Dunbar died in 1906. His successor, as most prominent man of his race in literature, is William Stanley Braithwaite, editor, anthologist, critic, and poet. He has published two volumes of verse, *Lyrics of Life and Love* and *The House of Falling Leaves*, and many poems in magazines. By virtue of his *Anthology of Magazine Verse* for each year since 1913, he is recognized as chief sponsor for current American poetry.

There is authentic poetry, even if not much of new quality, in the verse of Frank Dempster Sherman, a teacher of architecture in Columbia University and a literary reviewer, as well as a poet of distinction. His metrical efforts hardly rise to the heights of the perfection assigned them by recent notices of his collected poems, but many are endowed with the gift of nobility. The *Little Folk Lyrics* of 1892 and 1897 have not been excelled among his own lines in appeal to the average lover of modern verse. They are thoughtful as well as entertaining.

Frank
Dempster
Sherman

All up and down in shadow-town
The Shadow children go;
In every street you're sure to meet
Them running to and fro,

has, for both children and adults, the authentic ring of child life and imagination.

In Lloyd Mifflin's eleven little volumes of verse, over five hundred sonnets have been published, to-

Lloyd
Mifflin

gether with other poems. Mifflin was first a painter, but later devoted himself chiefly to the study and creation of the sonnet. His passions have been youth, love, spirituality, and poetry. His last volume, *As Twilight Falls*, finds its author an aged man, yet it includes many of his best sonnets and lyrics.

Alan Seeger

Had Alan Seeger supervised the bringing out of the beautiful volume of *Poems* which were written by him, some of the poems included would have been eliminated. His almost enviable death, as he, a member of the Foreign Legion of France, was charging enemy trenches on the field of Belloy-en-Santerre, July 4, 1916, made impossible his editing of his own work. But some of the poems in this volume the world could not afford to lose.

One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name, —

one cannot refrain from quoting when he thinks of the brief but brilliant career of this young student, traveler, poet, and soldier. His great achievement, after all, was his singing a marching-song to his comrades as he lay dying and they were charging to victory, — yet not that alone, for two poems, the *Ode in Memory of the American Volunteers Fallen for France* and *I Have a Rendezvous with Death*, are inspired poetry. We could dispense with the *Juvenilia*, though some of its Mexican verses are vivid in their imaginative touches; we could dispense with the thirty Sonnets and with the Translations; but the *Ode* and the *Rendezvous with Death* will be vital forever with

their echo of war "in its actual stress and under its haunting menace." The last lines of the *Ode* and all of the other poem were as nearly prophecy as mortal lips have uttered.

The spirit of Elizabethan poetry has not entirely vanished from the earth. Proof of this is furnished by the verse of Mrs. Olive Tilford Dargan and by that of Miss Lizette Woodworth Reese. To be sure, as one star differs from another in glory, so these poets differ in great measure of glory from the Elizabethans in both the gift of noble thought and of lofty speech; and they two differ from each other in lyric power. The talent of Mrs. Dargan tends to the drama, as we have already indicated, though in her dramas there are fine bursts of personal feeling embodied in choicely melodious lyric strains. She has made many contributions of lyric verse to magazines, and a recent volume, *Path Flower*, is filled with flashes of beauty. A reading of "To a Hermit Thrush" and "There's Rosemary" will introduce one to poetry in which, especially in the second of these, the old mastery of vowel music lives again.

Two "belated
Elizabethans"

Olive Tilford
Dargan

The representative work of Miss Reese, a Maryland woman, is in *A Handful of Lavender* and *A Quiet Road*. As a lyric poet she is superior to Mrs. Dargan, though the lyric power, while more full, is more quiet. There is not in American literature much poetry like that of Miss Reese. It belongs to the elder classic world of English literature. There is much of American prose that belongs in style and spirit to earlier days, yet our verse rarely assumes the body or the

Lizette
Woodworth
Reese

robe of an earlier date. But Lizette Woodworth Reese might well have lived in the golden days of Herrick and Lovelace. Not that she is an imitator of an earlier time; her poetry has the flavor rather of a dateless age, but in seventeenth century England there chanced or were ordained to be more poets of her type than before or since. Greece has had them, too, and Italy, yes, and France. "Late Elizabethans" and "Caroline poets" have always been, and have always subtly thought and curiously wrought. Miss Reese loves beauty for its own sake, but the expression of beauty is with her the expression of truth, — the beautiful is the good made perfect, too. Into her verse comes the truth of her experience, and it is good and useful because it is beautiful. "To a White Lilac," "Love Came Back at Fall O' Dew," "Keats," "Thomas à Kempis," and "To a Town Poet," such poems as these are not many amid the flood of verse that fills our anthologies. One wonders, after all, if the aptest characterization of Miss Reese would not be that she is a wanderer from a Grecian shore.

Edith Thomas

Miss Edith Thomas, born in Ohio in 1854, is one of the foremost singers of the World War. Her themes are salient ones, and the verses expressing those themes are not written for verse's sake only, but for the sake also of inspiration, and of comfort. She had, however, for many years before the war pleased the public with her emotional verse, and pleased the intellectuals with other verse not lacking in emotion but primarily philosophical in its content. She writes nothing that is not next to super-perfect in finish. It is all poetry,

true poetry, in feeling, in form, and in power to lift the mind from the particular to the universal, or, when she chooses, to drive the mind from its refuge in generalizations back to the particular, the concrete, the daily real. Her style is varied, yet never straying from the grace and taste of the poets of the more classic days, not even in her most passionate moments. Her more intellectual poems will probably survive those which are primarily of feeling, unusual as this may seem. There may be "thoughts beyond the thrall of words," but Miss Thomas dares to put into her energetic verse thoughts to give form to which has puzzled the philosophers from the Greeks down. Single poems, "The Compass," "They Said," "Palinogenesis," "The Soul of the Violet," "The Inverted Torch," "A Far Cry to Heaven," and others are among the treasured gems of our literature. An excursion through her many little volumes which have come from the press from time to time all the way from 1885 until very recently, will reward with new and added beauty the truer poetic memories of one who will adventure among these little masterpieces of art and thought.

Gertrude Hall was born in Boston, educated in Gertrude Hall Florence, Italy, and now resides in New York City. She is an excellent translator, accomplishing consummate work in her rendering into English from the French of Paul Verlaine and of Edmond Rostand. In her original verse she is our present-day poet of the quaint, the fanciful, the wistful. *Far from To-day*, *Allegretto*, and *The Age of Fairgold* are titles of

three of her books, and in themselves the titles illustrate the contents of the books. Many of her poems are of nature and many of human love, and are as irresistible as the things they celebrate.

Anna
Hempstead
Branch

Some of the most reflective, if not profound, and most artistic poems of recent days are included in the three volumes by Anna Hempstead Branch, *The Shoes That Danced and Other Poems*, *The Heart of the Road and Other Poems*, and *Rose of the Wind*. They are written only for lovers of poetry; they will not compel the attention of the unwilling. The long poem "Nimrod" in *Rose of the Wind* is, as its title suggests, a treatment of a very ancient tradition. It is a subtly ingenious piece of work.

Mrs. Lionel
Marks, again

In the poetry of Josephine Preston Peabody there is much of mystery, much of subtle guessing about the riddle of our life, much pursuing of elusive thought. Yet all is handled, not in fancifulness, but with strongly imaginative power. Her best dramas, *Marlowe* and *The Piper*, we have already briefly discussed. The lyric verse, together with some dramatic dialogue, is contained in the volumes entitled *Fortune and Men's Eyes*, *The Wayfarers*, *Singing Leaves*, and *The Harvest Moon*, the last being dedicated "To the Women of Europe." We have learned to expect only the true, the beautiful, and the pure in her delicate yet energetic verse.

Alice Brown

Alice Brown's unwearied labors as dramatist, novelist, and short-story writer have left little time for poetry, though one volume, *The Road to Castaly*, has attracted world-wide attention. William Vaughn

Moody's untimely death deprived us of one who promised greatness in poetry as in drama. *The Departure*, *Heart O' Wild Flower*, and many others reveal the nature-seer, the psychologist, and the musician that Moody was. His poems call one back to them, for the melodies are haunting, the thought fascinating; one feels that here more is said than meets the eye, more that one wants to hear, and to hear again and again. We have lately come to the appreciation of Japanese art, helped to it partly by the verse of Mrs. Mary McNeil Fenollosa, who resided in Japan for eight years, and whose lovely lilting lyrics are a constant source of delight to all who know them, as are the descriptive poems, with their picturesqueness seemingly both fanciful and real. Some of the philosophy of the Orient has crept into her verse, but the verse is chiefly lyrical. "To a Japanese Nightingale" and "An Eastern Cry" will give a hint of the quality of the fashioning of her pictures as they are drawn in her Oriental poems, a quality vital, impulsive, fully musical and faintly melancholy.

Our better magazines and weekly periodicals are frequently kept in the path of a fine tradition by the fugitive poetry which poets whom we have discussed and others, minor ones, and even masters of prose, occasionally contribute. An anthology of verse from magazines of the past thirty years, though it were of verse as yet unpublished in any book form, would fill a large volume, however exacting of quality the anthologist might be.

III
THE LITERATURE OF
CANADA

III

THE LITERATURE OF CANADA

I

The Writers of Fiction.— The first native-born Canadian to make real and permanent a native literature in Canada was Charles G. D. Roberts, who is now a captain training cadets in England and Wales. Although philosophers, scientists, and historians, such as Grant Allen, George John Romanes, and Goldwin Smith had been giving Canada a world reputation in research and in thought, yet literature inseparable from the soil did not appear in our neighbor country until about 1887, when Roberts's volume of verse entitled *In Divers Tones* was first published. This and other poetic works of his are more important than his imaginative prose, but will be reserved for discussion in the treatment of the Canadian poets. Roberts has written several novels and other prose works, the chief of all of them being a book of short stories and sketches dealing with the life of the wild and with human life and entitled *Earth's Enigmas*. The title means precisely what it says. Another distinctive and absorbingly interesting work is *The Watchers of the Trails*. Roberts was born in New Brunswick, but it was while he was professor of English and French lit-

The elder
Roberts

erature in King's College at Windsor, Nova Scotia, that he gained his impressions of the beauty of the earth and his intimate knowledge of creatures of field, forest, and stream and the greater waters, and that the impulse to romantic story-telling and to lyricism came to him. It is in that same earthly paradise that most of the best literature of Canada found its inception.

Parker

Sir Gilbert Parker is a citizen of the British Empire rather than of Canada alone, not merely because he has lived in Australia and now lives in London, but because the characters and the thought in his novels, even those within Canadian setting, are characters who might live and thoughts which might be inspired elsewhere within imperial limits. *Pierre and His People*, *The Seats of the Mighty*, and *The Right of Way* are his most read novels. He is the author also of many short-stories, those of northern life, as in *Northern Lights*, not disappointing the expectation of any who have been entertained by his other work.

"Ralph
Connor"

Ralph Connor, whose real name is Charles William Gordon, can hardly be said to have written from purely artistic inspiration or purpose. He has not depicted life because he was compelled to do so by the intensity of a desire to see life as it may be re-presented in the magic mirror of art, but because he wanted to preach. His sole aim seems to have been an ethical one; in fact, the ethical purpose is obtrusively apparent. The effect of art may be a moralistic effect, but if that is its aim, the aim should be concealed. Gordon's work fails to be artistic in another respect, also. While the true artist forms his characters from broadly general

elements in human life, in doing so he makes us think he is really depicting particular characters, whose traits are peculiarly individual; the true artist is an historian of human nature, though he seems to be a writer of actual biographies. But Gordon quite obviously has failed to individualize his characters. Yet *The Sky Pilot* and a better book *The Man from Glen-garry* have excited immense interest and have received high praise. They are interesting and praiseworthy, but, as we have said, for their moral teaching rather than for their artistic value. Yet this is not quite all, for these books have brought to the uninformed much accurate knowledge of the types of life lived in the mountains and forests of Canada.

Better creative writers, even if less popular, than Gordon, are Margaret Marshall Saunders, Sara Jeannette Duncan, and Lucy M. Montgomery (now Mrs. Ewan McDonald). Lucy M. Montgomery has captivated the youth of all America with her *Anne of Green Gables*. Anne of
Green Gables

Our neighbor to the north has one author who has been dubbed, in an exaggerated fashion, the Mark Twain of Canada, — Stephen Leacock, of Montreal. In reality, he is more American than Canadian, and for two reasons: his work is written mainly for readers on this side the border, as most of its facts and its allusions show, and the sort of humor he is given to is the American brand, with its burlesque, its exaggeration, and its consciously deliberate mingling of the serious with the comic. Leacock was born in England, and perhaps this may account for his apparent failure to "The
Mark Twain
of Canada"

become acclimatized to the intellectual atmosphere of Canada and for his keeping an eye constantly looking southward and even across seas. Two or three of his volumes are worthless, such as *Behind the Beyond* and *Frenzied Fiction* and *Further Foolishness*, but *Nonsense Novels*, *Sunshine Sketches*, *Literary Lapses*, *Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich*, and *Literary Essays and Studies* command respect for their author's wisdom and versatility as well as convulse his readers with their humor and wit.

**A Family
of Poets**

The Poets. — We have mentioned the poetry of Charles G. D. Roberts. His son, Lloyd Roberts, is not much less than second to the father in nature painting and in melodious phrasing, as even he who runs may readily discover in the 1914 volume entitled *England Overseas*. In lyrical movement and in love of the lighter phases of the life of nature, Lloyd Roberts is more akin to Bliss Carman, his father's cousin. The influence of the elder Roberts upon both these poets and upon every other one who has written in Canada since 1887 demands more than the passing mention of his work.

Roberts

Charles G. D. Roberts was not only the first but the most original and versatile, and has still done the best technical artistic work, of all Canadian authors. We have a special claim upon him, too, as his residence now is New York City. After some experiments, resulting in a volume published in 1880, and entitled *Orion and Other Poems*, Roberts removed from Toronto to Nova Scotia and fell under the spell of the beauty of the Old Acadian land. In 1887 *In Divers Tones* was pub-

lished, and all discerning readers saw that a new star had arisen in the east. *Songs of the Common Day* and *The Book of the Native* came in 1893, and in 1896 respectively, and gained their author recognition in Europe as well as upon this continent. It was noted abroad that a new force had entered literature, a force native to North America, but questioning the enigmas and mysteries of nature and of the human soul everywhere. Other volumes followed, among them *New York Nocturnes* and *The Book of the Rose*. Not all of the verse in the first of these two books is good; much of it is obvious and mechanical. Possibly the author does not feel at home away from Canada, and, living artificially, perforce must write artificially. His best single poem is *Ave: An Ode for the Shelley Centenary*, 1892. The wild life of field and woodland and air, the colorful and changeful life, animate and still, of marsh and stream and lake, the insoluble mysteries of spirit, human and divine, fill these books of verse. Yet it is doubtful if his poetry will be as influential in the future as his psychological animal stories written in imaginative prose. Roberts is more Canadian, less American, in prose than in verse; and since he is in prose more true to the actual in the local, he will probably live longer for his prose than for his verse.

Bliss Carman lived during his most receptive and formative years in the home of his uncle, C. G. D. Roberts. Under this influence, Nova Scotia became his early inspiration, and the poet spirit and skill of the older man so built up and impelled the younger that the pupil is now thought by many to be superior to his

Bliss Carman

master, — as the pupil should be, else progress would cease in the world. Bliss Carman is better known in this country than Roberts is, due to his association with Richard Hovey in the writing of the three little volumes of *Songs from Vagabondia*. He also resides in New York. But it is the strictly Canadian poem, *Low Tide on Grand Pré*, that takes rank as his leading poem. It is always the mysterious lure of the sea that elicits the most devoted service of Bliss Carman's muse. He is never far from the

 . Dream-like, plangent, and eternal
 Memories of the plunging sea.

His poems are not altogether free from monotony and many are over-elaborate in word and phrase; yet in most of them sound and form are consonant with sense. Bliss Carman has become less wandering in heart as he has grown in years, and more and more he has turned away from personal impressions of detail in the world to the development of the thought of the organic unity of man and nature. Lightness of spirit, though, is not absent from the later poems, in the three small volumes of *Pipes of Pan* and in *The Word at Saint Kevin's*.

Two brothers of Charles G. D. Roberts as well as his son and his cousin are poets. Theodore Roberts and William Carman Roberts, both now residing at Fredericton, New Brunswick, engaged at an earlier date in journalism in New York City, and have written commendable verse for magazines and literary periodicals. But of this family it would seem to be only Charles

Roberts, Lloyd Roberts, and Bliss Carman who will not be overlooked by the historian of literature in English.

Canadian verse writers are numerous. The salient names besides those considered above are Gilbert Parker, Lucy M. Montgomery, Eric Mackay Yeoman, Robert Norwood, Hugh John Maclean, W. E. Marshall, Archibald Lampman, Duncan Campbell Scott, Isabella Valancy Crawford (who died in 1887), Katherine Hale (Mrs. J. W. Garvin), Dr. J. B. Dollard, Arthur S. Bourinot, and Douglas Durkin, and perhaps Robert Service and Dr. W. H. Drummond of the "Vaudeville School of Canadian Poetry." Drummond's *The Voyageur* and *The Habitant* are very popular, but hardly "English verse." Service apparently is not acceptable to all at home, for Sergeant J. D. Logan, a Canadian, writing from a camp in England after the publication of Service's *Rhymes of a Red Cross Man*, describes the content of the book as "versified brutalities." But, however much one may agree that nearly all of the verses in the earlier volumes by Service are of the ten-twenty-thirty variety, it is difficult to agree with the Canadian critic that all in this latest volume is "illegitimate verse."

The *Rosalie*, a sonnet sequence by Eric Mackay Yeoman, *Love's Diary*, another sonnet sequence, by Gilbert Parker, and *You and Memory Pictures* by Lucy M. Montgomery are among the noble and beautiful lyrics of the last thirty years. Archibald Lampman is celebrated above most of his fellow versifiers of Canada, with the exception of Roberts and Carman, for his nature poems. He has a philosophic insight and vision

Many
singers

that is strong and, to many readers, comforting. His sonnet *Outlook* completely recognizes the burden of our life, yet has the quietly optimistic uplift which characterizes all the saner hours of the greater poets.

Hugh J. Maclean's *A Masque* is a praiseworthy bit of original invention destined to make many a reader alert to the rising importance of the poets across the border. It is one of many attempts to place the artist in his rightful position relative to the soldier and the priest, and, brief as it is, may not be passed by in the literature of the life of art. It may not have the scope of the dramatic poems in the same field by Hauptman, Hirschfeld, Hofmansthal, and Yeats, but, as the diminutive proportions of a Corot are sometimes superior in quality to the mammoth canvas of a Raphael cartoon, so this very diminutive dramatic poem is at least not inferior because of its brevity. The reader will find it upon pages 223 and 224 of the *Canadian Magazine* for January, 1917.

When W. E. Marshall's *Brookfield*, an elegiac poem, appeared in 1914, the *Boston Transcript* compared its workmanship and compelling expression with that of the famous elegies of Milton, Arnold, Emerson, and Whitman, — and the *Transcript* is a very conservative paper. Isabella Valancy Crawford's *Love's Land*, or, as it is often called, *The Master Builder*, is typical of the poetry of Canadian women, in its joyousness, its unselfish eagerness for revealing the spirit of service, and its spirituality.

Among the great number of poems inspired by the War, in which Canada has revealed herself as in spirit

as much a part of the British Empire as England herself, the most read have been Dollard's sonnet upon the death of Rupert Brooke, Durkin's *The Fighting Men of Canada*, Duncan Campbell Scott's *To a Canadian Lad Killed in the War*, and Katherine Hale's long poem *The White Comrade* and her briefer poems in *Grey Knitting and Other Poems*, though some of these are not so sure of immortality as others that are more immediately appealing to the popular heart.

The series of sonnets in Robert W. Norwood's *His Lady of the Sonnets* (1915), for tone color, for melody, and for loftiness of conception of the "refining redemptive, transmuting power" of love that is spiritual, is unsurpassed in the work of this group of poets. The American reader who may yet need introduction to the fact that Canada has a literature may well begin with the sonnets of Norwood. There may be less of artistry in them, but there is no less of intellectual sincerity, of authentic emotion, of genuine breadth of conception than in the poetry of the pre-Raphaelites of nineteenth century England.

Altogether, it would not have been difficult in 1913 to have disagreed with the opinion of Mr. T. G. Marquis in his *English-Canadian Literature* that "the chief glory of Canadian literature is in its poetry;" but since the beginning of the Great War, while the value of Canada's imaginative prose has not decreased, that of its poetry has so appreciably advanced that serious disagreement as to the relative rank of the prose and the poetry of this Celtic or Gaelic country would seem no longer possible.

The chief
glory

IV
TABLE OF AMERICAN
AUTHORS

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TABLE OF AMERICAN AUTHORS

PROSE

<i>Author</i>	<i>Birth</i>	<i>Death</i>	<i>A Representative Work</i>	<i>Its Date</i>
Silas Weir Mitchell	1829	1914	Hugh Wynne, Free Quaker	1897
Samuel Langhorne Clemens	1835	1910	Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc	1896
John Burroughs	1837		Literary Values	1904
William Dean Howells	1837		The World of Chance	1893
Francis Hopkinson Smith	1838		Colonel Carter of Cartersville	1891
John Muir	1838	1914	The Mountains of California	1894
Alfred Thayer Mahan	1840	1914	The Influence of Sea Power upon History	1890
John Fiske	1842	1901	The Discovery of America	1892
William James	1842	1910	The Will to Believe	1897
Henry James	1843	1916	The Real Thing	1893
James Lane Allen	1849		Two Gentlemen of Kentucky	1891
Lafcadio Hearn	1850	1904	Kotto	1902
Henry van Dyke	1852		The Story of the Other Wise Man	1896
Robert Grant	1852		Unleavened Bread	1900
Thomas Nelson Page	1853		Meh Lady	1896
Francis Marion Crawford	1854	1909	A Cigarette-Maker's Romance	1890
Josiah Royce	1855	1916	The World and the Individual	1900

<i>Author</i>	<i>Birth</i>	<i>Death</i>	<i>A Representative Work</i>	<i>Its Date</i>
Henry Cuyler Bunner	1855	1896	A Sisterly Scheme	1891
Woodrow Wilson	1856		Mere Literature, and Other Essays.....	1896
Mrs. Ruth McEnery Stuart.....	1856		Napoleon Jackson, The Gentleman of the Plush Rocker	1902
Herman K. Vicle	1856	1908	The Inn of the Silver Moon	1901
Gertrude Atherton	1857		The Splendid Idle Forties	1902
Margaret Deland	1857		The Iron Woman	1911
Samuel McChord Crothers	1857		The Gentle Reader	1903
Alice Brown	1857		Meadow-Grass	1895
Kate Douglas Wiggin	1857		The Old Peabody Pew	1907
Agnes Repplier	1857		Essays in Miniature	1892
Owen Wister	1860		The Virginian	1902
Hamlin Garland	1860		Main-Traveled Roads	1890
Mary E. Wilkins Freeman.....	1862		Silence and Other Stories	1898
Mrs. Edith Wharton	1862		Ethan Frome	1911
Paul Elmer More	1864		Shelburne Essays	1904
William Clyde Fitch	1865	1909	Beau Brummel	1908
William Sydney Porter	1867	1910	A Municipal Report.....	1910
David Graham Phillips	1867	1911	The Second Generation	1907
William Allen White	1868		A Certain Rich Man	1909
Mary Austin	1868		The Arrow Maker	1911
Charles D. Stewart	1868		Partners of Providence	1907

<i>Author</i>	<i>Birth Death</i>	<i>A Representative Work</i>	<i>Its Date</i>
Robert Herrick	1868	The Master of the Inn	1908
William Vaughn Moody	1869	The Faith-Healer	1909
Newton Booth Tarkington	1869	Monsieur Beaucaire	1900
Frank Norris	1870	The Pit	1902
Stephen Crane	1871	The Red Badge of Courage	1895
Winston Churchill	1871	Coniston	1906
Eleanor Hallowell Abbott	1872	The White Linen Nurse	1913
Anne Sedgwick	1873	The Encounter	1914
Ellen Glasgow	1874	The Miller of Old Church	1911
Dorothy Canfield	1879	The Bent Twig	1915
Ernest Poole	1880	The Harbor	1915
Henry Synnor Harrison	1880	Queed	1911
James Oppenheim	1882	Pay-Envelopes	1911
Percival Wilde	1887	The Unseen Host	1917

VERSE

<i>Author</i>	<i>Birth Death</i>	<i>A Representative Work</i>	<i>Its Date</i>
John Greenleaf Whittier	1807	To Oliver Wendell Holmes	1892
John Banister Tabb	1845	Lyrics	1897
Lloyd Miffin	1846	As Twilight Falls	1916
James Whitcomb Riley	1849	Longfellow	1892

<i>Author</i>	<i>Birth Death</i>	<i>A Representative Work</i>	<i>Its Date</i>
Eugene Field	1850 1895	With Trumpet and Drum	1892
Edwin Markham	1852	Lincoln	1901
Edith M. Thomas	1854	The Inverted Torch	1890
George Edward Woodberry	1855	The North Shore Watch	1890
Lizette Woodworth Reese	1856	A Handful of Lavender	1891
Alice Brown	1857	The Road to Castaly	1917
Frank Dempster Sherman	1860 1916	Little Folk Lyrics	1897
Gertrude Hall	1863	The Age of Fairygold	1894
Clinton Scollard	1860	The Lyric Bough	1904
Richard Hovey	1864	Unmanifest Destiny	1898
Madison J. Cawein	1865 1914	Undertones	1896
Frederic Lawrence Knowles	1869	A Song of Desire	1904
William Vaughn Moody	1869 1910	The Masque of Judgment	1900
Cale Young Rice	1872	Earth and New Earth	1916
Paul Laurence Dunbar	1872	Lyrics of Lowly Life	1896
Josephine Preston Peabody	1874	The Piper	1909
Joyce Kilmer	1886	Main Street, and Other Poems	1917
Alan Seeger	1888	I Have a Rendezvous with Death	1916
Olive Tilford Dargan		Lords and Lovers	1906
Anna Hampstead Branch		Rose of the Wind	1910
Mary McNeil Fenollosa		Out of the Nest	1899

CANADIAN AUTHORS

PROSE

<i>Author</i>	<i>Birth Death</i>	<i>A Representative Work</i>	<i>Its Date</i>
Charles G. D. Roberts	1860	<i>Earth's Enigmas</i>	1896
Charles William Gordon	1860	<i>The Sky Pilot</i>	1899
Horatio Gilbert Parker	1862	<i>The Right of Way</i>	1901
Stephen Leacock	1869	<i>Arcadian Adventures with the Idle Rich</i>	1914
Lucy M. Montgomery		<i>Anne of Green Gables</i>	1908
Margaret Marshall Saunders		<i>Beautiful Joe</i>	1907

VERSE

W. E. Marshall	1859	Brookfield	1914
Charles G. D. Roberts	1860	Ave	1892
Bliss Carman	1861	<i>Low Tide on Grand Pré</i>	1893
Archibald Lampman	1861	<i>Lyrics of Earth</i>	1895
Duncan Campbell Scott	1862	Ottawa	1893
John D. Logan	1869	<i>Insults of Death</i>	1916
Robert W. Norwood	1874	<i>His Lady of the Sonnets</i>	1915
Lucy M. Montgomery		<i>The Watchman and Other Poems</i>	1916
Robert W. Service	1876	<i>Rhymes of a Red Cross Man</i>	1916
Katherine Hale		<i>The White Comrade and Other Poems</i>	1916
Hugh John Maclean		<i>A Masque</i>	1914
Lloyd Roberts	1884	<i>England Overseas</i>	1914
Arthur S. Bourinot	1893	<i>Laurentian Lyrics and Other Poems</i>	1915

PROBLEMS

PROBLEMS

Essays

1. Select a dozen of the best editorials from six of the best metropolitan newspapers of the country, published during any recent week. Project your mind twenty-five years into the future, and from that point of view in time estimate the lasting values of those editorials.

2. Make an anthology of essays from magazines of the year 1918.

3. Find all the books of essays published in English during the years 1917-1918, and write a critical comparative estimate of them.

4. Compare the American essay of the first two decades of the twentieth century with that of a century earlier.

5. Locate the following sentences from President Wilson's State Papers and Addresses, and point out their bearing:

a. The world must be made safe for democracy.

b. It is clear that nations must in the future be governed by the same high code of honor that we demand of individuals.

c. I believe in the ordinary man.

d. It is not an army that we must shape and train for war; it is a nation.

e. The day has come to conquer or submit.

f. There is, therefore, but one response possible from us: Force, Force to the utmost, Force without stint or limit, the righteous and triumphant Force which shall make Right the law of the world, and cast every selfish dominion down in the dust.

g. There is something very fine in the spirit of the volunteer, but deeper than the volunteer spirit is the spirit of obligation.

h. Once more we shall make good with our lives and fortunes the great faith to which we were born.

i. The eyes of all the world will be upon you because you are in some special sense the soldiers of freedom.

j. The great duties of a new day awaken a new and greater national spirit in us.

k. Our present and immediate task is to win the war, and nothing shall turn us aside from it until it is accomplished.

l. What we seek is the reign of law, based upon the consent of the governed, and sustained by the organization of mankind.

Fiction

1. Does the short-story writer of the present time employ artistic unity for the sake of the effect of his story, or employ his story for the sake of artistic unity? Be concrete.

2. Study the author in *Blix*, and in *The Three Fates*, and in *Main-Travelled Roads*.

3. What sets apart British from American novelists of the present, — verbal power, constructive ability, or selection of material?

4. Compare the leading woman characters of Howells, Grant, Phillips, and Frank Norris.

5. Study the earlier works of Frank Norris, — *Moran of the Lady Letty*, *McTeague*, *Blix*, and *A Man's Woman*, — for the descriptive material and qualities.

6. Search for the primeval, the elemental, in American fiction of to-day.

7. Trace the symbolic character of the leading personages in Ellen Glasgow's *The Miller of Old Church*.

8. Owen Wister says, "It is significant to note how this master (Henry James) seems to be teaching a numerous young generation. Often do I pick up some popular magazine and read a story (one even of murder, it may be, in tropic seas or city slums), where some canny bit of foreshortening, of presentation, reveals the spreading influence, and I say, 'Ah, my friend, never would you have found out how to do that if Henry James hadn't set you thinking!'" Find examples of the influence of Henry James in stories published in current numbers of magazines.

9. Make an anthology of "Best Short-Stories of the War," omitting text, but supplying title-page, preface (add an "Introduction," if needed), and whatever notes and bibliography are necessary to make the volume one for "study," and not for reading only.

10. Study the North American Indian in recent fiction.

11. John Galsworthy's definition of a plot is, "That sure edifice which slowly rises out of the inter-play of circumstances on temperament, and temperament on circumstance, within the enclosing atmosphere of an idea." With this definition as a starting-point, write an essay upon the plot of novel and of drama.

12. Discuss the function of conversation in drama.

13. Compare magazine illustration of short stories of the present-day with those of forty years ago.

Poetry

1. Study the humor of the poetry of Robert Burns and of Thomas Hood. Do you find anything like their work in American verse?

2. Read the Odes mentioned in the preceding pages, and compare with Coleridge's *France*.

3. Read the article upon "The Significance of Nova Scotia" by J. D. Logan in *The Canadian Magazine* for November, 1916, and pursue in further detail the study of the writers of Nova Scotia.

4. Is the literature of Canada more or less similar to that of Scotland than to that of England?

5. Study carefully *The Lotos-Eaters* by Tennyson. Compare with it, simply as poetry, your favorite American poem.

6. Make two lists by titles of the verses of the "new poets," futurists, imagists, and the like, of America, one list containing the poems unmistakably innovations

in form and the other of those following already employed patterns.

7. Make a list of the fifty best poems in American literature. How many of these were written since 1890?

8. Upon which is the finest artistic work being exerted in America to-day, novel, short-story, essay, or poem?

9. Is the following true? —

Things of deep sense we may in prose unfold,
But they move more in lofty numbers told.

10. Find the three best Canadian and the three best American poems of the War.

11. Make a study of story-telling poems in American poetry.

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